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SEPTEMBER 2007

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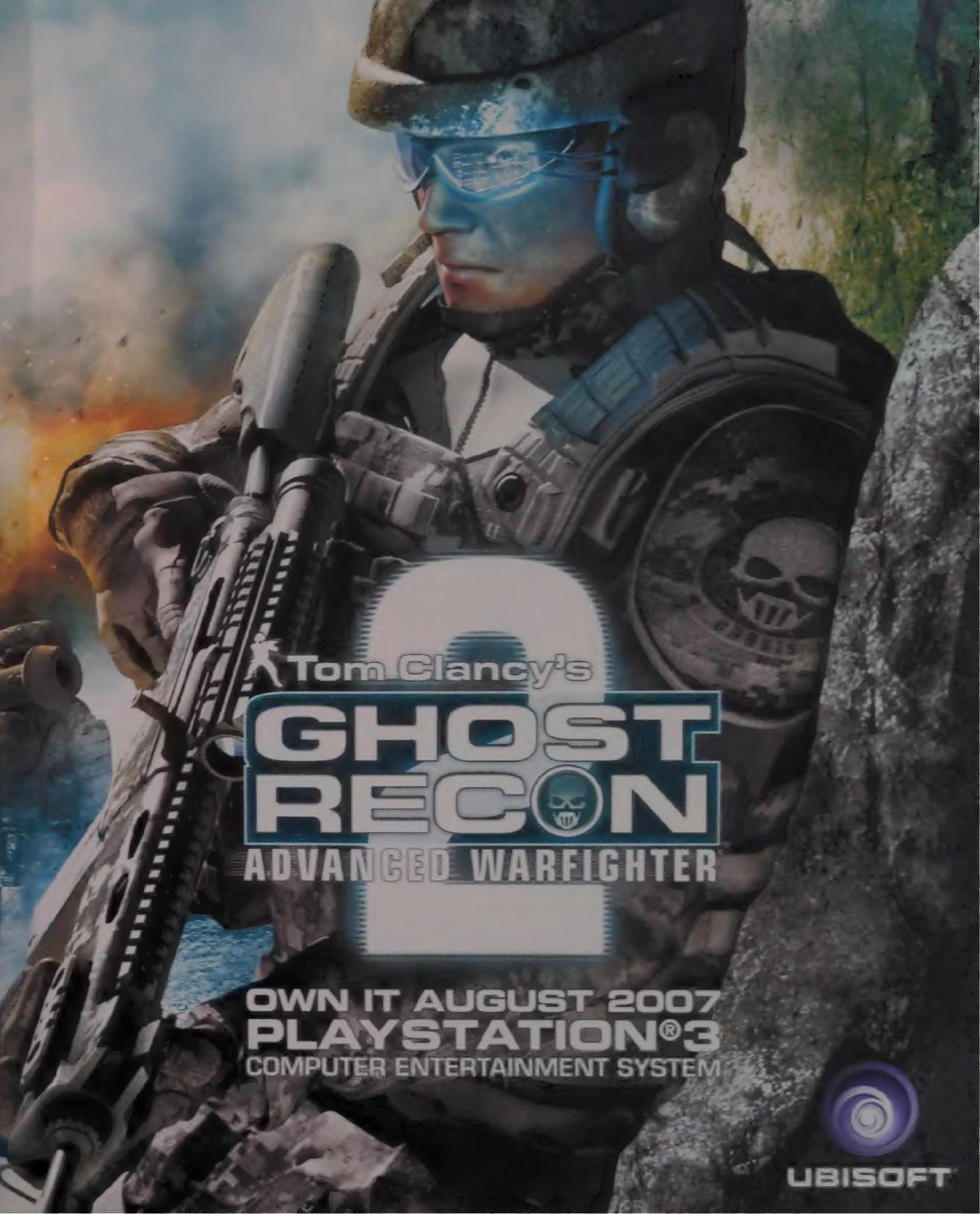
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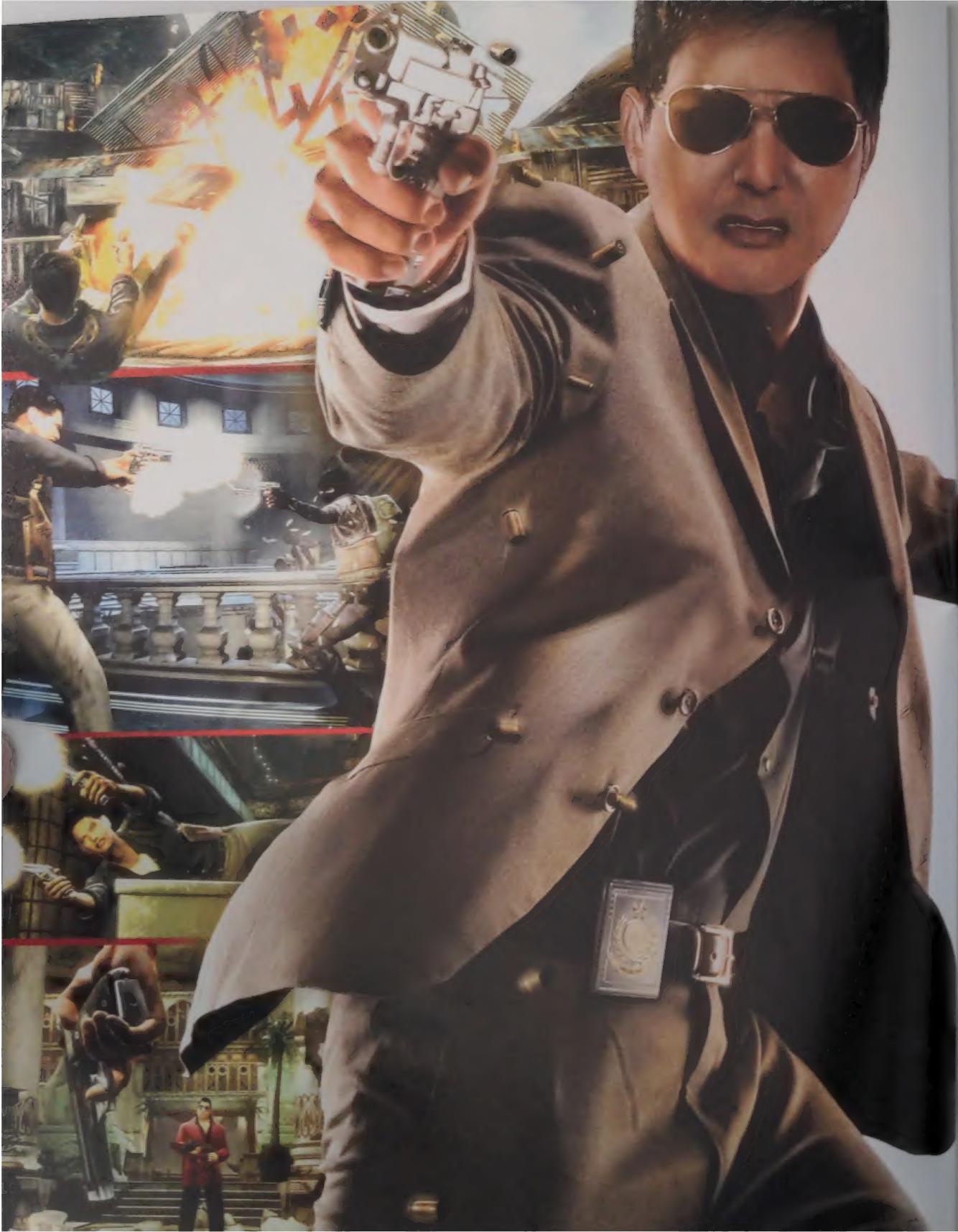
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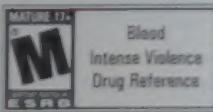
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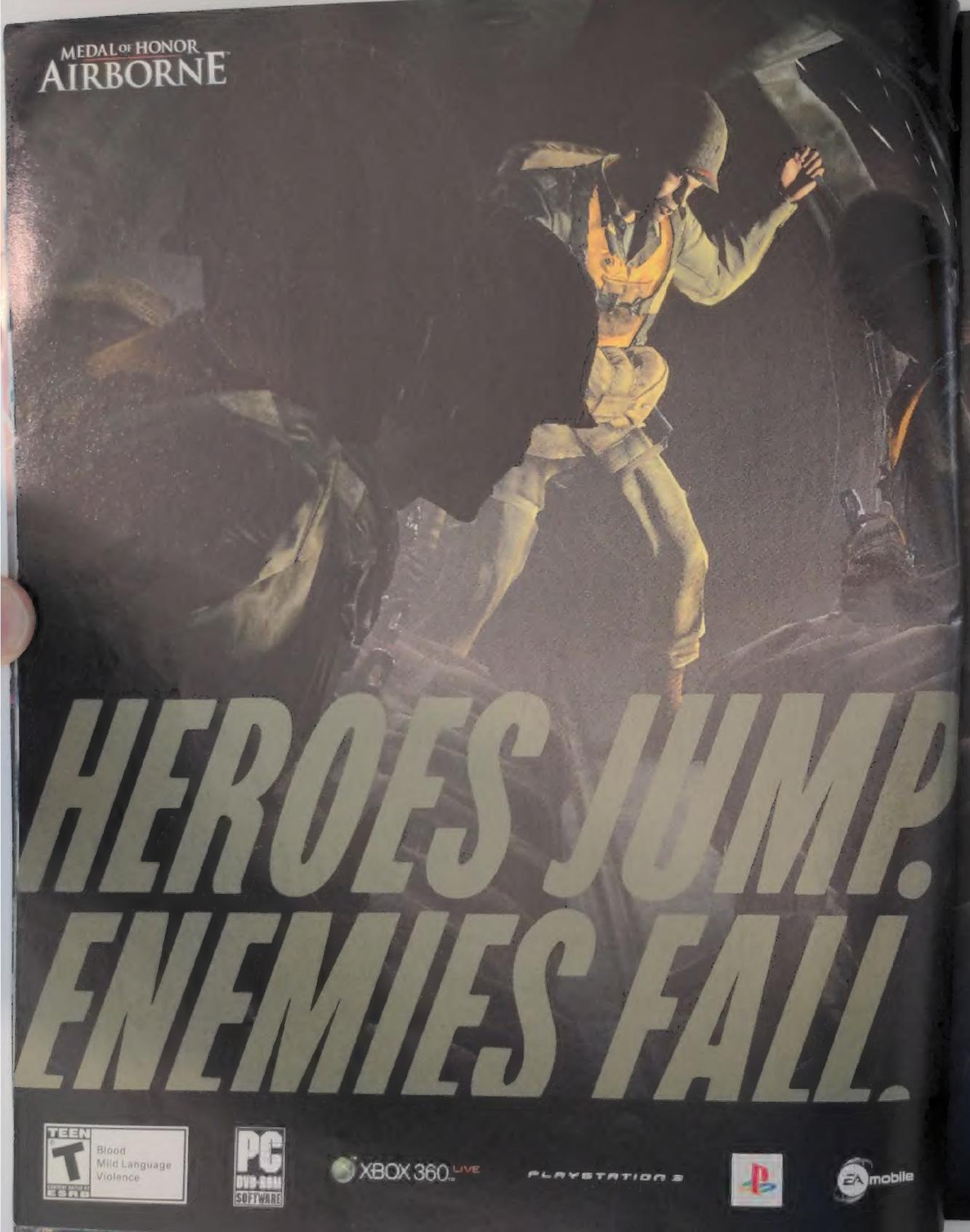
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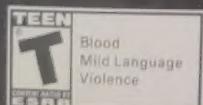
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E3 HOT 50

Who cares about boring industry stuff – what about the games? We bring you the definitive list of the 50 most exciting titles at this year's E3. From Halo 3 to de Blob, we've got everyone's taste covered.



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KILLZONE 2

The trailer two years ago wasn't real-time, but what we recently played sure is. Do you want to come in and see big gorgeous screens of Sony's flagship PlayStation 3 title for 2008? Of course you do.

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The company behind the massively successful Brothers in Arms series has this new project in the works, and we have the world-exclusive first look at it. By applying a lot of the driving concepts behind Diablo to the first-person shooter genre, Borderlands will be entirely unique. Randomized levels, four-player co-op support, and half a million weapons await in this action/RPG hybrid.

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STAFF

People Who Actually Get Paid To Play Video Games



MY SLICE OF E3

ANDY McNAMARA
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The new E3 was the minor mess that I thought it would be, but it certainly could have been worse. I could bore you with plenty of pluses and minuses about the whole event, but instead I will focus on what really matters, and that's the games.

I was really surprised to see how many casual games were at the show, and quite frankly, how many of them I thought would actually be a good time. Now, I'll warn you: I'm a hardcore gamer. If it doesn't have 60 different button combinations or offer intense, non-stop gameplay, I'm generally not interested.

That said, I found a lot of stuff that caught my attention, including THQ's DieBlob, EA's Smarty Pants, and especially Sony's LittleBigPlanet (developed by Media Molecule). These games are the very definition of casual, but at the same time they really showed how casual doesn't necessarily have to mean shallow or short.

Of course, games like Rock Band and Guitar Hero III – the pinnacle of games that anyone can pick up and play but can challenge a hardcore gamer for months – had fantastic showings. The music genre isn't going anywhere soon, and I'm excited to see all the new ways gaming is expanding not only the market, but the way people look at entertainment. I love music; I live with music in every room of the house and on my iPod, but there is nothing quite like experiencing music the way you can with these two games. It has truly changed the face of music forever. I can't listen to an album without wishing I could play along.

I also have to give credit to all the original downloadable content finding its way to Xbox Live and PlayStation Network these days. Sony especially impressed me with games like PixelJunk Racers, Echochrome, and Everyday Shooter. Sure they can't really compare with epics like BioShock that cost tens of millions of dollars to make, but in their own way they are fun at its most basic level, and once you catch the bug you just can't stop playing.

Finally, there are tons and tons of the games that are closest to my heart. The giant, super-budget games that squeeze every ounce of power out of their respective systems. These games are easy to find throughout the pages of this issue so I'll let you explore those on your own, but I will say Call of Duty 4 simply blew me away once again, and was easily my game of the show.

Cheers,

Andy >> andy@gameinformer.com

Handle: The Game Hombre **Expertise:** RPGs, Action/Platform, Driving First-Person Shooters **Interests:** Silverstar Pickups, Transformers, iPhone (I Want One So Bad, But I'm Waiting For V2.0), My New Electric Cruiser **Dislikes:** Waiting For The New Seasons Of Weeds And Dexter (I Wish It Was David Carradine, Not Keith Carradine, Joining The Cast), AFK People In Alterra Valley (If You Want To Be Lame, Join The Alliance) **Current Favorite Games:** World Of Warcraft, Guitar Hero II & III, BioShock, Rock Band, Everyday Shooter, Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare, Assassin's Creed, Picross DS

10 GAME INFORMER



Reiner >> reiner@gameinformer.com

Handle: The Raging Gamer **Expertise:** RPGs, Action, First-Person Shooters, Strategy, Sports, Fighting **Interests:** The Dinobots Being Considered For The Second Transformers Film, World War Hulk (Every Hero Gets Smashed By This Green Goliath), Battling For Achievement Point Supremacy Against Randy Pitchford (Does This Guy Even Sleep?), Extras **Dislikes:** Saying Goodbye To Harry Potter (It Was A Good Run, Kids Sniff), Obnoxious Brewers Fans (Here Come My Cubbies! Eat It!) **Current Favorite Games:** BioShock, Grand Theft Auto IV, Rock Band, Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare



Matt >> matt@gameinformer.com

Handle: The Original Gamer **Expertise:** First-Person Shooters, Action/Platform, Action/Adventure, Action/Sports **Interests:** Tim Buckley – Goodbye And Hello, Ratatouille, Totally Getting Ripped Delis, How Much Nicer Santa Monica Is Than Downtown LA, Bruno's Italian Restaurant **Dislikes:** Ann Coulter (Maniac Psychot), Stifling Humidity, Not Eating For 12+ Hours At A Time, Not Being Rich Enough To Afford All The Awesome Games Coming Out This Fall **Current Favorite Games:** BioShock, Tiger Woods PGA Tour 08, Picross DS, Rock Band, Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare



Kato >> kato@gameinformer.com

Handle: The Game Katana **Expertise:** Sports, Racing, Action/Adventure, Action/Platform **Interests:** Harry Potter And The Deathly Hallows, AMC's Mad Men, Orange Pop, Selected Things About The New E3, The White Stripes' Icky Thump **Dislikes:** Michael Vick – Pure Scum, Irish Pub Music, Miller's Assumption That Being A Super-Taster Makes Him Better Than The Rest Of Us **Current Favorite Games:** Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2008, All-Pro Football 2K8, Jeannie D'Arc, Rock Band, BioShock, Picross DS



Adam >> adam@gameinformer.com

Handle: The Alpha Gamer **Expertise:** RPGs, Strategy, First-Person Shooters, Fighting **Interests:** Learning 2 Heal (Lifeblob Is Total Hax), Not Being Exhausted After A Bike Ride, Chicago's Awesome Aquarium, They Might Be Giants – The Else, His Dark Materials **Dislikes:** Heel Aggro, Delective Binges (I Swear Guitar Hero Isn't This Green), Biking Through Soup **Current Favorite Games:** World Of Warcraft, Call of Duty 4, Civilization IV: Beyond The Sword, Majesty, The Legend Of Zelda, Twilight Princess, Super Mario World



Joe >> joe@gameinformer.com

Handle: The Real American Gamer **Expertise:** RPGs, Adventure, Action, Strategy, Puzzle **Interests:** Harry Potter Reading Binges (Take That, Social Life), The New E3 (For The Most Part), Robo-Raiden, "Returning" Matt's CD, Ransacking **Dislikes:** Grudgingly Admitting That Bumblebee Is Kind Of Cool Now, Getting The Red Ring Of Death, Matt "forgetting" His Inspirational CD On My Desk, That Chewbacca Isn't At Every Press Conference **Current Favorite Games:** BioShock, Blue Dragon, Eternal Sonata, Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns Of The Patriots, LittleBigPlanet, Assassin's Creed



Miller >> miller@gameinformer.com

Handle: The Once And Future Gamer **Expertise:** RPGs, Action/Adventure, Platform, First-Person Shooters, Music, Puzzle **Interests:** Creating New Star Wars Fans, Ham Of All Glazes, Harry Potter And The Unhealthy Reading Obsession, A World Of Super-Taster/Philosopher Kings **Dislikes:** Mayflies, The Fact That I Am Currently 40 Percent Infected, The Interminable Wait For Another Transformers Movie, Wrestling **Current Favorite Games:** Mass Effect, Lair, Killzone 2, Assassin's Creed, Need For Speed: Carbon, Rock Band, Fallout 3, Uncharted: Drake's Fortune, Pac-Man Championship Edition



Bertz >> mattbertz@gameinformer.com

Handle: Lord Garrington III **Expertise:** First-Person Shooters, Sports, Action, RPGs, Strategy **Interests:** Bryan's Sweet Pomm Stache, Pending Football Season, Getting Peter Moore To Do A Shot Of Bushmills (What A Trooper), Creative Harry Potter Spoilers **Dislikes:** Barker Hanger (Talk About A Ghost Town), Lack Of New Game Announcements At E3, CNN's Slow Descent Into Becoming El Entertainment Television **Current Favorite Games:** NCAA Football 08, Civilization IV: Beyond The Sword, BioShock, Call of Duty 4: Modern Combat, Assassin's Creed



Ben >> ben@gameinformer.com

Handle: Your Friendly Neighborhood Gamer **Expertise:** Action/Adventure, Action/RPGs, Platform, Survival Horror, First-Person Shooters **Interests:** King Of Kong: A Fistful Of Quarters, The Abyss (Turns Out It's Still A Good Movie), UL Hawaiian BBQ (Why Aren't You In Minnesota?), E3 Parties **Dislikes:** Waking Up An Hour Early The Morning After E3 Parties, Joe Cutting In Line In Front Of Me And The Wendy's Lady Who Did Nothing, Billy's Invitations To The Petting Zoo Since "The Incident" **Current Favorite Games:** Fallout 3, Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare, Resident Evil 5, Tomb Raider Anniversary, Guitar Hero III



Bryan >> bryan@gameinformer.com

Handle: The Gamer's Advocate **Expertise:** Action/Adventure, RPGs, Survival Horror, First-Person Shooters, Rhythm **Interests:** Alex Robinson's Tricked, When Bands Tour Before Their New Album Is Released (Get A Nice Mix Of Old Stuff Since They Don't Want New Tracks To Show Up On The Internet), Two Harbors, MI **Dislikes:** My Stupid RAZR Phone (I Need A Working Screen To Call People, Dammit), Joe's Stockade: Of Bouncy Balls **Current Favorite Games:** Borderlands, Rock Band, Guitar Hero III: Legends Of Rock, Contra 4, BioShock, Call of Duty 4

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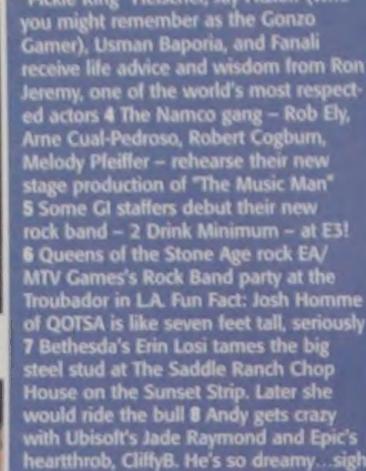
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1 The gals from Sega - Tali Fischer, Jennie Sue, and Thu Nguyen - give Nick their best Bond girl impression 2 The GI Online Crew - Jeff, Nick, and Billy - breakdown with Infinity Ward's Mark Rubin and Grant Collier 3 Sandbox Strat's Bobz "Pickle King" Fleischer, Jay Fitzloff (who you might remember as the Gonzo Gamer), Usman Baporia, and Fanali receive life advice and wisdom from Ron Jeremy, one of the world's most respected actors 4 The Namco gang - Rob Ely, Arne Cual-Pedroso, Robert Cogburn, Melody Pfeiffer - rehearse their new stage production of "The Music Man" 5 Some GI staffers debut their new rock band - 2 Drink Minimum - at E3! 6 Queens of the Stone Age rock EA/MTV Games's Rock Band party at the Troubadour in L.A. Fun Fact: Josh Homme of QOTSA is like seven feet tall, seriously 7 Bethesda's Erin Losi tames the big steel stud at The Saddle Ranch Chop House on the Sunset Strip. Later she would ride the bull 8 Andy gets crazy with Ubisoft's Jade Raymond and Epic's heartthrob, ClifffyB. He's so dreamy...sigh

He's the Secret.
She's the Agent.

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GI COMMUNITY

Game Informer has a thriving online community, and this is where they can sound off about issues facing the gaming industry today.

THE QUESTION:
What games have you gone back to play (or replay) during the dry summer gaming season?

With programs like *Heretic* and *Doom* in my new rig, I've been playing those a lot for nostalgia's sake. I've also taken a liking to playing *System Shock 2* in multiplayer mode.

mitch_the_swat

I always play *San Andreas* in the summer, normally in June. I have absolutely no idea why. This year was my third year.

DaveMeat, TestSteak



GTA: San Andreas

I finally picked up *Mystique 2* again. The fact that there has been a *Mystique* game out for almost three years that I haven't completed multiple times, let alone once, is one of the scariest skeletons in my closet.

TrueHerd

I've been playing *Star Fox* on the SNES (thank God that still works). It's odd how I've had the game for 10 years and I still have a hull every time I play it.

Rabid Chipmunk



Star Fox

I literally busted off my SNES to play N64/FW "98. One minute into playing and I already was missing the game disc. The player ratings were brutal. *Greedy* was only a 77 overall, and there was this one guy with a 15 rating. How can you make it into the NHL with a 15?

The Quigmore

I've been going through the *Randall and Clark* series, collecting the platinum bolts and leveling up all the weapons. It never gets old blowing through armies of baddies.

FFZeldatos

I've been playing a lot of *Call of Duty: Trigger* for the first time, using GTA, Vice City, and little *Veteran* here and there. Anything to make the days pass quicker.

Taleangel00

Do you want to make your voice heard? Weigh in with your opinion at www.gameinformer.com/forums.

WE WANT REVAN

I was just wondering if you had any news as to whether or not there will be a Knights of the Old Republic 3. I know LucasArts is making *The Force Unleashed*, but couldn't they at least give a developer permission to start making a new KotOR?

Grant Rogers
Via yahoo.com



Knights of the Old Republic 2

Alas, another E3 has come and gone, and still there was no announcement of Knights of the Old Republic 3. We're just as anxious as you are to know the fate of this series, but a representative from LucasArts could only say, "Knights of the Old Republic is a very important franchise to LucasArts, but we have no announcements regarding it at this time." Fans shouldn't lose hope yet. No one is saying the franchise is dead, and the best things in the Star Wars universe usually come in trilogies, like the original trilogy and the Timothy Zahn trilogy.

VANISHING ACT

I just finished reading issue 171, and I noticed something slightly amiss. The Connect Ten feature, a staple of all the issues I've gotten, was gone! Instead, there was the Connect Debate and Connect Gamer. Are these new features going to replace Connect Ten? Or was there not enough room for it?

D. Sheehan
Via yahoo.com

There are several parts of the Connect section that are used on a rotating basis. You might not see Debate, Gamer, Ten, or Culture in every issue, but we always try to fit a couple in alongside the staples like Interview and Opinion. Don't worry – there will be another Connect Ten list for you to disagree with in the coming months.

RISING TOLL

I am a 30-year-old gamer – that's a long career, and it shows no sign of ending. I've played a lot of World War II shooters in that time, and I recently got to thinking: Exactly how many virtual Nazis have I wiped out? Wolfenstein, Battlefield, Medal of Honor, Call of Duty – these are all games I've spent countless hours playing. What does that leave me for a body count? If I average two kills for every minute of gameplay, and assume I've played a total of 1,000 hours between all WWII games, that's 120,000 Nazis! I actually may be underestimating my total, but I was wondering if you had ever done the math.

Jeremiah Smith
Via hotmail.com

Whoa. No, we hadn't ever done the math, but that is a disturbing figure. Quantifying your gaming experience can really put things into perspective. If only real life were

ping with both hands, and one missed note screws you up. Don't give us crap about how you have seven buttons and a turntable – *Guitar Hero* necessitates coordination between the strum bar and the fret buttons, not just button pressing. Try strumming 17.3 notes per second on "Trogdor," then come cry to us about your precious Beatmania.

Anonymous
Via yahoo.com

It's no surprise that, as the most popular music game ever, *Guitar Hero* has its share of staunch supporters. Once *Rock Band* releases, it will be interesting to see if a rivalry develops between the two series and their fans. They could go at each other's throats, like David Lee Roth versus Van Halen. On the other hand, they could work together to bring better music to the world, like Spinal Tap and the Folksmen.

PURE COMEDY GOLD

I was reading your July issue and I noticed a mistake on your Calendar. On July 13 you have a small remark about the *Harry Potter and the Order of the Phoenix* movie. You mention that Daniel Radcliffe is 30 years of age. What? I went online and did some research on him, and found that he is in fact 18 years old.

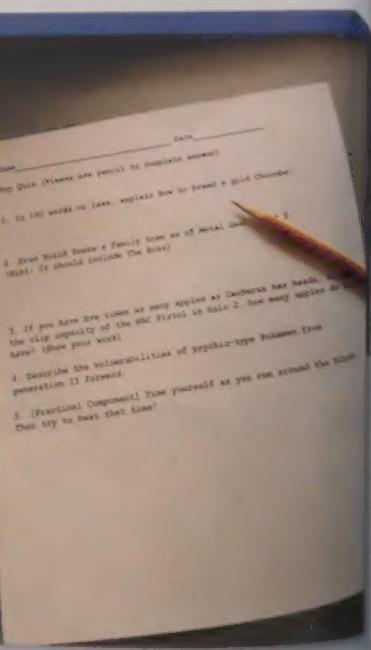
Andrew Cau
Via msn.com

See, it's funny because the kids in those movies are getting old! Sure, they aren't 30

STUDY GUIDE

During the school year, my English class was taking a test on *Fahrenheit 451*. What can I say? I didn't read the book. I came to the question, "What character in Greek Mythology was tortured for giving fire to the humans?" Lucky for me, I was playing God of War II, so I wrote down Prometheus, and got the question right! This taught me that video games are more important than reading. I'm so smart.

John Carroll
Westland, MI



Way to fail that test by one less point, John! You can learn all kinds of crazy stuff from video games...but not everyone is fortunate enough to be tested on it. Therefore, we have compiled a short essay quiz (no cop-out multiple guess questions) for you to display your knowledge. Just write out your responses on a separate sheet of paper, then repeatedly show your answers to all of your friends. They will be impressed.

BIONIC WOMAN

SEPT 26 WED 9/8c NBC

nbc.com/bionic

yet, but by using hyperbole to draw attention to fact that they are aging faster than their characters, pure comedy gold is created. Of course, it probably seems less funny now, but explaining the joke will suck the humor out of any punchline, right? Sigh. We know, we know – it wasn't a great joke to begin with. Reiner wrote it.

DIAMONDS IN THE ROUGH

What games would you recommend for a person who just bought a PSP?

Addison Allen
Via gmail.com

Even though some people will complain that the PSP's software lineup is less than amazing, that doesn't mean the system hasn't built up a stable of quality titles since its release. If you've recently purchased a PSP and want some recommendations, here's a short list of our favorites that you should consider checking out:

- Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops
- Grand Theft Auto: Liberty City Stories
- Daxter
- Puzzle Quest: Challenge of the Warlords
- Lumines II
- Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror
- Tekken: Dark Resurrection
- Ratchet & Clank: Size Matters
- Valkyrie Profile: Lenneth

AAAARG!

Your article in Issue 171 about Alternate Reality Game renewed my confidence in my most trusted gaming magazine. I have followed the genre for quite some time, constantly intrigued, not only by the games and their prizes, but also the mystery enshrouding the motivations of those perpetuating the contests. But as I read the article, a very substantial ARG stood out in my mind, yet I found no mention of it in the article: the Publius Enigma. Similar to the Nine Inch Nails ARG cited in your article, the Publius Enigma began with Pink Floyd and their 1995 album *The Division Bell*. I consider this to be the forerunner of ARGs, using the Internet to spread. I just thought this would be an interesting addendum to your article.

Clay Adams
Whitehouse, TX

Thanks for the contribution, Clay. While the experts we spoke with agreed that *The Beast* is probably the first full-fledged ARG, you are correct to point out that the genre didn't just suddenly spring into being. It evolved, drawing influence from precursors like the Publius Enigma. We didn't mean to diminish the contributions of the efforts that came before *The Beast*, but that project is where many of the concepts coalesced and began to define ARGs as we understand them today.

READER ART

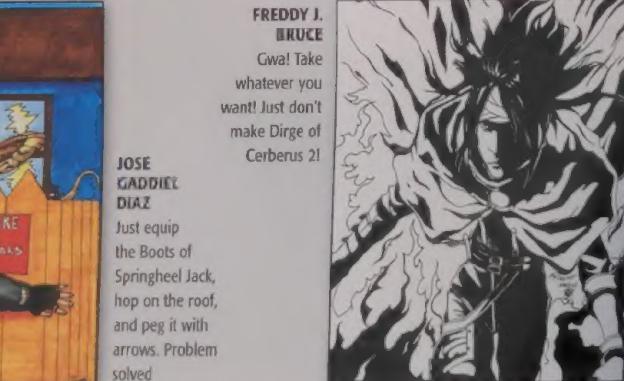
SEPTEMBER WINNER!

JOSHUA ADAMS
Can you guess how many Happiness Tokens and Balloons you need to collect in *The Darkness*?



JUSTIN HAMMOND

"Boi-oi-ing!" That's the sound the diving board is making. We repeat, the diving board



FREDDY J. BRUCE
Gwa! Take whatever you want! Just don't make Dirge of Cerberus 2!



MOUA YANG

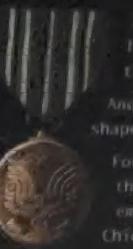
Little Red Riding Hood sure grew up fast



BROOKE BURDICK
It is a rare pleasure to beat up Piñatas!

He's received the highest commendations for bravery. Countless decorations for honor and selflessness. But Master Chief's greatest achievement reaches far beyond what any medal could ever hope to commemorate.

For the men and women of the 26th century, he is a human embodiment of possibility, the last Spartan standing against an angry tide. This strength of spirit is forged through his legend.



Iericho VII. The Battle of Reach. High Quality. Tales rise with sacrifice and courage. Tales that grow, flourish, and inspire.

And while he shapes his own history, he in turn shapes the history of all who follow.

For no matter what horrors are released upon the day, they cannot match the reply of soldiers emboldened with his spirit: an army of Master Chiefs unto themselves. **BELIEVE**

HALO3.COM

A hero need not speak. When he is gone, the world will speak for him.



Jump in.

XBOX 360. LIVE

CONNECT

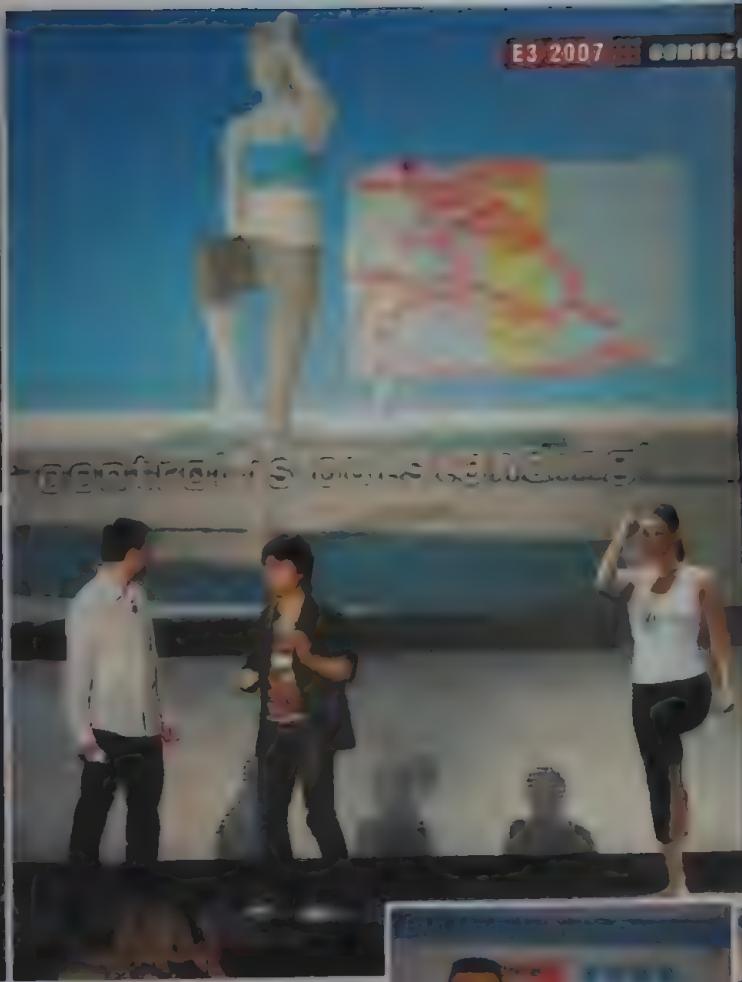
Breaking News, Views, And Technology From
The Cutting Edge Of Gaming

E3 2007 Connect



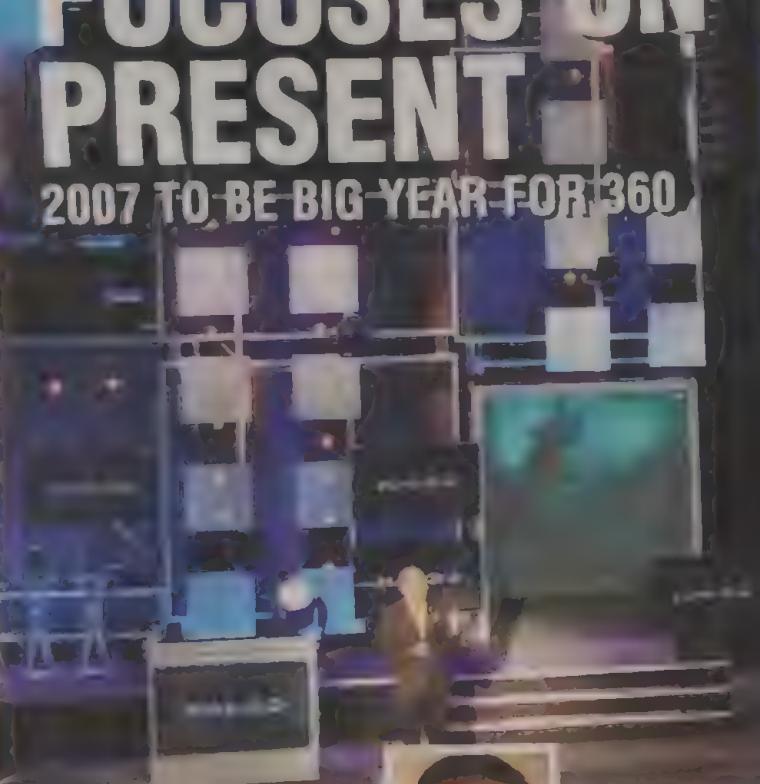
MEDIA & BUSINESS SUMMIT

E3 has changed, but it's still the beacon that sets the tone for the rest of the year and beyond. This year, the messages from the big three console companies – Microsoft, Nintendo, and Sony – couldn't be more different from one another. Their press conferences were reflective of each company's particular place at this moment in time, and yet the battle amongst them for the attention of gamers is as fierce as ever. Read on as Game Informer analyzes what they said, and what they had to say for themselves.



MICROSOFT FOCUSES ON THE PRESENT

2007 TO BE BIG YEAR FOR 360

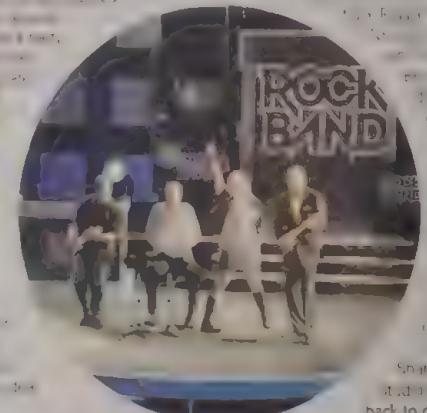


M

icrosoft's Jeff Bell was the star of the show at the company's booth at E3 2007. He was surrounded by a wall of screens showing off the latest games for the Xbox 360, including Halo 3, Rock Band, and Devil May Cry 4. Bell was all smiles as he spoke to the press about the company's focus on the present. "We're really excited about what we have for the rest of the year," he said. "We've got some great games coming out, and we're looking forward to showing them off at E3." The booth also featured a demo of the new Halo 3 console, which includes a motion-sensing controller, a hard drive, a headset, a Play & Charge kit, Ethernet cable, component AV cable, one-month Live Gold membership, HDMI port, and other exclusive Halo 3 game pictures and a theme available via download. Halo 3 itself is not included.



■ Microsoft's Jeff Bell



■ Peter Moore tries to rock out with Harmonix team members on Rock Band

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Peter Moore tried to rock out with Harmonix team members on Rock Band. The demo was a bit of a bust, but Bell had the audience laughing with his enthusiasm. After the demo, he announced that the company was bringing back the original Xbox. That night, two new Xbox 360 consoles were shown, each featuring a different frame per side. One was a black and white version of the original Xbox, while the other was a colorful version. Both frames were designed to look like the original Xbox. The new Xboxes will be available in September.

After the demo, the crowd was asked if they wanted to see more. Bell said that the audience could expect to see more of the same. "We're really excited about what we have for the rest of the year," he said. The demo proceeded to show off the new Halo 3 console, which includes a motion-sensing controller, a hard drive, a headset, a Play & Charge kit, Ethernet cable, component AV cable, one-month Live Gold membership, HDMI port, and other exclusive Halo 3 game pictures and a theme available via download. Halo 3 itself is not included.

For more on the Xbox 360 games at E3, please check out our continuing coverage on page 34

ARCADE ACTION

Microsoft is promising 100 titles for Xbox Live Arcade by the end of the year, including Marathon, Durandal, Space Giraffe, Sonic the Hedgehog, Golden Axe, Hexx 2, Wing Commander Arena, and War World.



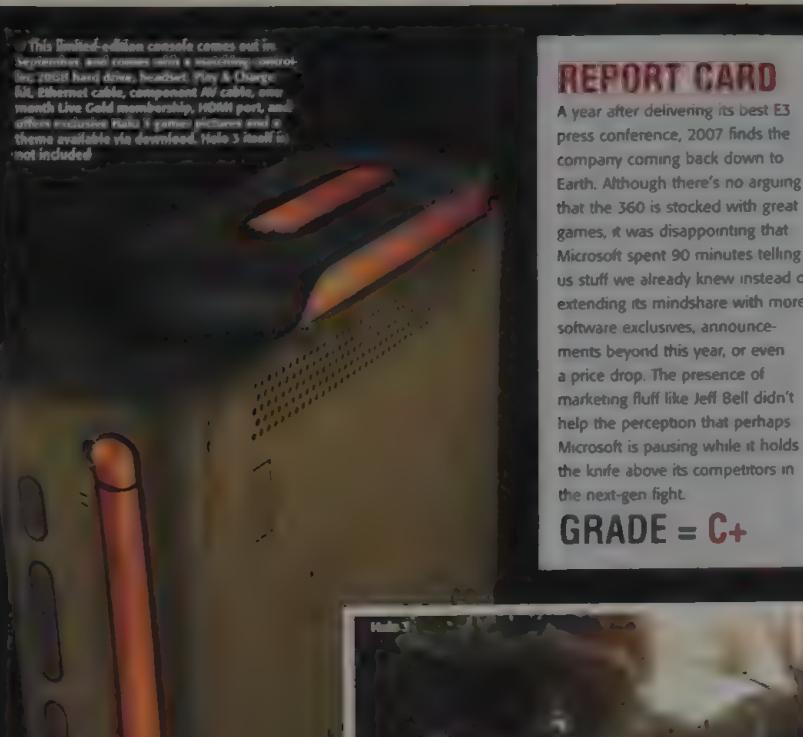
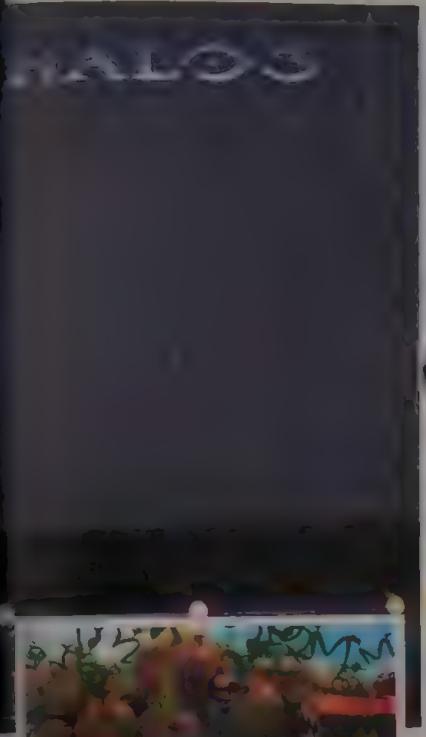
■ Marathon: Durandal



■ Hexx 2



■ Bomberman Live



REPORT CARD

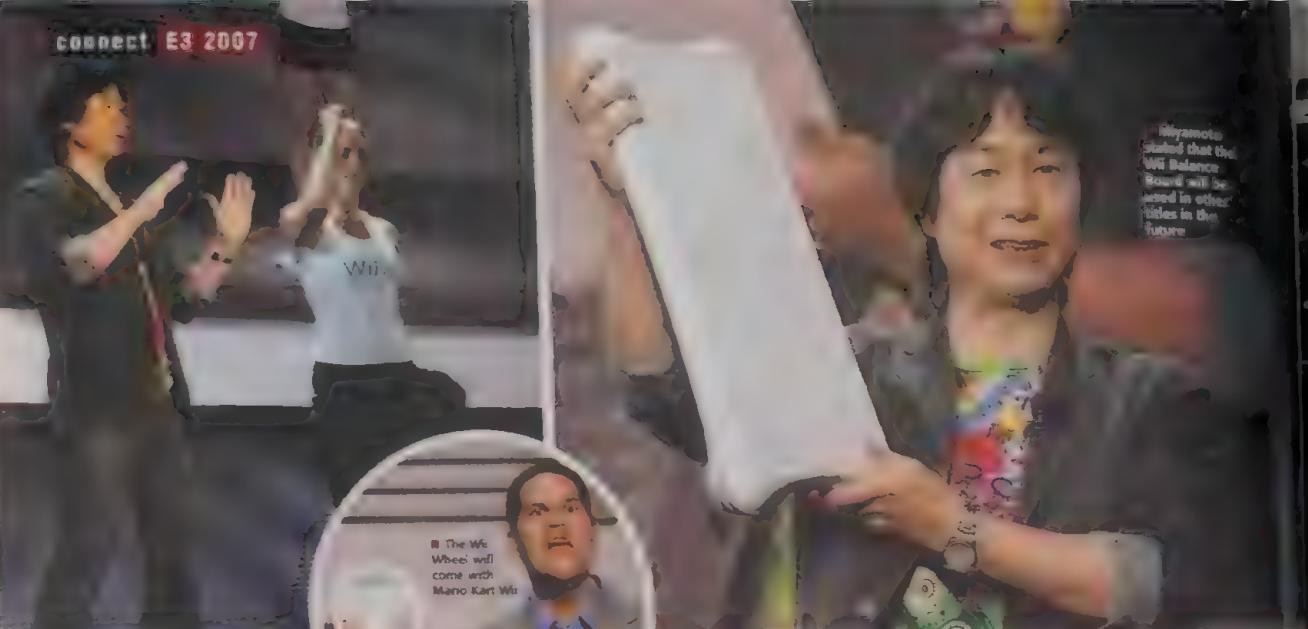
A year after delivering its best E3 press conference, 2007 finds the company coming back down to Earth. Although there's no arguing that the 360 is stocked with great games, it was disappointing that Microsoft spent 90 minutes telling us stuff we already knew instead of extending its mindshare with more software exclusives, announcements beyond this year, or even a price drop. The presence of marketing fluff like Jeff Bell didn't help the perception that perhaps Microsoft is pausing while it holds the knife above its competitors in the next-gen fight.

GRADE = C+

NINTENDO GOES CASUAL

After the first few days, Anil displayed some impatience and asked me to beat out the case. I told him that I would get everyone's phone numbers and email addresses and install his software. He agreed and I have been from 15 to 20 people and 20 now and still counting. I believe only the company I work for has done more than split and share their hardware.





The Wu
Wheel will
come with
Mario Kart Wiz

gated were who deserved the credit. I leave the palette to you, Mr. Sumner, and his cohorts. As far as I'm concerned, the new customers I've seen seem equally impressive, but with among the most charming personalities in the industry, it's hard to win over the crowd with honest dealing.

After a visit from Marc Cadey, the short shrift the second weekend of May, as well as a visit from Steve Jobs about a month ago, we were at the A.G.A. show last week, the touring of some third-party, revised games. It was time for the most predictable surprise of any conference—

an appearance by the architect, Steve Jobs. What's this? True? There we go again? Steve Jobs here? I rather like it—of course he game it at us, zeroed a new board, board-controlled the camera, and weighed in at a mere 100 pounds. The job was done, and what? No answer? No, no, no! There are other surprises in store, including a mouthful of OEM software, including a

4.5-MHz 32-bit processor that promises much more power than the standard processor the Mac uses today.

For more on the genesis of Action! 2.0, consult the details starting on page 34.

REPORT CARD

Nintendo is enjoying its greatest success since the SNES era, so why did this year's E3 feel like a bit of a letdown? Well, the answer is simple: For all the success the Wii has had, it just doesn't have the breadth and quality of software across the board that it needs to become the world's number one system. While a lot of developers are getting on board with more Wii and DS-focused casual games, we were a little disheartened to see that a vast majority of the (very few) deep hardcore-oriented titles are still the same old Nintendo franchises we've known for years. As a business move, Wii Fit seems like a genius idea — we can see the *Good Morning America* reports on it already — but it's not exactly the type of thing that excites the fans who have kept Nintendo in the game even during the darkest days of the GameCube.

Grade: C



INTERVIEW

REGGIE FILS-AIME

PRESIDENT, NINTENDO OF AMERICA

Was Nintendo caught off guard by how successful the Wii has been, and did that play into the problems of hardware shortages?

We went into this planning for success. We knew we had something with Wii Sports and the strategic decision to back it in. The fact that we've been out of stock, effectively or 33 weeks says that demand has exceeded our expectations from that standpoint. And, in many ways, exceeded all expectations anyone could have had... But we're very pleased with how things have gone with Wii out of the gate.

Are there adjustments being made with regards to manufacturing, getting new production lines up and running and things like that?

We are. What you can see is that, on a worldwide basis, production has been ramping up and continues to ramp up. The issue is thinking through what your total capacity should be on a year-in, year-out basis. You need to be careful not to overshoot that... the fact is that you can't bring these new factories up to speed overnight. Our goal is to get to the point where you consumer can walk into

It's obviously selling well, and at the press conference you brought up the possibility of it being the number one overall console in the world. Microsoft has a very strong holiday lineup this year with GTA, Halo 3, and a lot of big franchises. Do you think being number one is a realistic goal, and when do you project Wii will be number one?

It's going to happen and it's going to happen on a worldwide basis. Unfortunately for Microsoft, while they have a healthy 115 business, they don't have much business

beyond that. They announced a shortage in their annual projection that was based on shortages in Europe in terms of meeting their sell-in projections. So we sit here with very healthy sales in North America, very healthy sales in Europe and Japan. I think that any reasonable analyst gets to the point that sometime in early fall, Wii will overtake Microsoft on a worldwide basis. What happens through the holiday is all going to be based on software line ups and available inventory.

You talked a lot about the changing demographics of gamers at the press conference, especially more older gamers, female gamers, and non-traditional gamers being attracted to the Wii. Are you going to make efforts to keep that going throughout the life of the Wii?

We certainly have internal goals. You look at something like Wii Fit in terms

of sales it's doing very well on the Nintendo Console. It's why we have things like the Mi Channel that's coming out. It's why we have news and forecasts. It's a much wider view of what online could be compared to simply a multiplayer, co-op mode type of experience. Now, we'll do that too. But, for us, the end game is getting consumers to pick up a remote and have a great experience. That, to us, is the goal. That could be in creating their Mi or a wide range of different activities. Our competitors, despite what they want to try and say, they're not going for a mainstream audience – not at those price points and not with the heavy first-person shooter types of games.

But what about something like Home? That would seem to be more tailored to a casual audience.
I think it's been done before, right? It's called Second Life.

One thing that is confusing is that, while you've done a great job in making Wii approachable to non- and casual gamers, the decision to make the unit Wi-Fi only has never really made sense from that perspective. If you wanted to drive older people and non-core gamers online, people that aren't as tech savvy, isn't it asking a lot of them to set up their own wireless router?

It certainly wasn't a mistake. I think the statistic is that something like 50 percent of broadband-enabled homes have a Wi-Fi system up in their home. . For consumers who want to run a line through their home, that capability is there. We sell those adaptors through our consumer service.

Well, if 50 percent have Wi-Fi, then 50 percent don't. And historically, aftermarket add-on penetration rates aren't great. Are you worried that it

limits your online audience?
As we sit here today, 40 percent of Wits are
retired. The last statistic I saw for Microsoft
was in the thirties. So as we sit here today we
have a better connection rate than they do. I
certainly think we made the right decision.

WiiWare is a program to reach out to very small and garage developers. Can you talk about that in more specifics?

RB: What we do is essentially check if it runs correctly on our system. The games will be available through the Wii Shop channel, you purchase them, just like the old games on sale. Our view is that the dream is to rise to the top. We'll create ranking and voting mechanisms. The best games will rise to the top.

Do you have your own games that fit into that niche – original downloadable games – in development?

We have our own games in development that fit into that pipeline.

THE NEW THUMB IN TOWN DANNY WAY'S THUMB TALKS TO SKATE

skater: Danny's thumb, what's up?

Danny's thumb: Not much.

s: So, what's it like to be two and a quarter inches tall and pull 14-foot airs?

dt: It's scary, but it's cool, too.

s: Does fear motivate you?

dt: Not really. It's more the fear of succumbing to fear, letting fear win. That's what freaks me out most.

s: That's heavy. Do you like philosophy?

dt: Just Nietzsche. The rest are posers.

s: You've been creating a ton of new tricks lately. Where's the sudden inspiration coming from?

dt: I've found sweet places to do all your dan Vespolas and I've been shooting a bunch. I've all been clicking lately.

s: Describe the "Big Stun."

dt: It's like a big flip, but without starting with an ollie and a flip.

s: The 45 different game-play tricks weren't enough for you?

dt: You gotta always push it. That's what skating is.

s: Were you a big gamer before this?

dt: A little. I like shooters. Never skater games, though. Too much button-mashing.

s: Do you own any guns?

dt: No, that's more pointer finger's thing. I'm more into vinyl figures, you know, like tokidoki's Mozzarella.

s: Do you ever make out with those figures? They're about your size.

dt: No, that's gross. Plus, they don't feel right.

s: Speaking of feeling right, tell me about the flickit controls in the game.

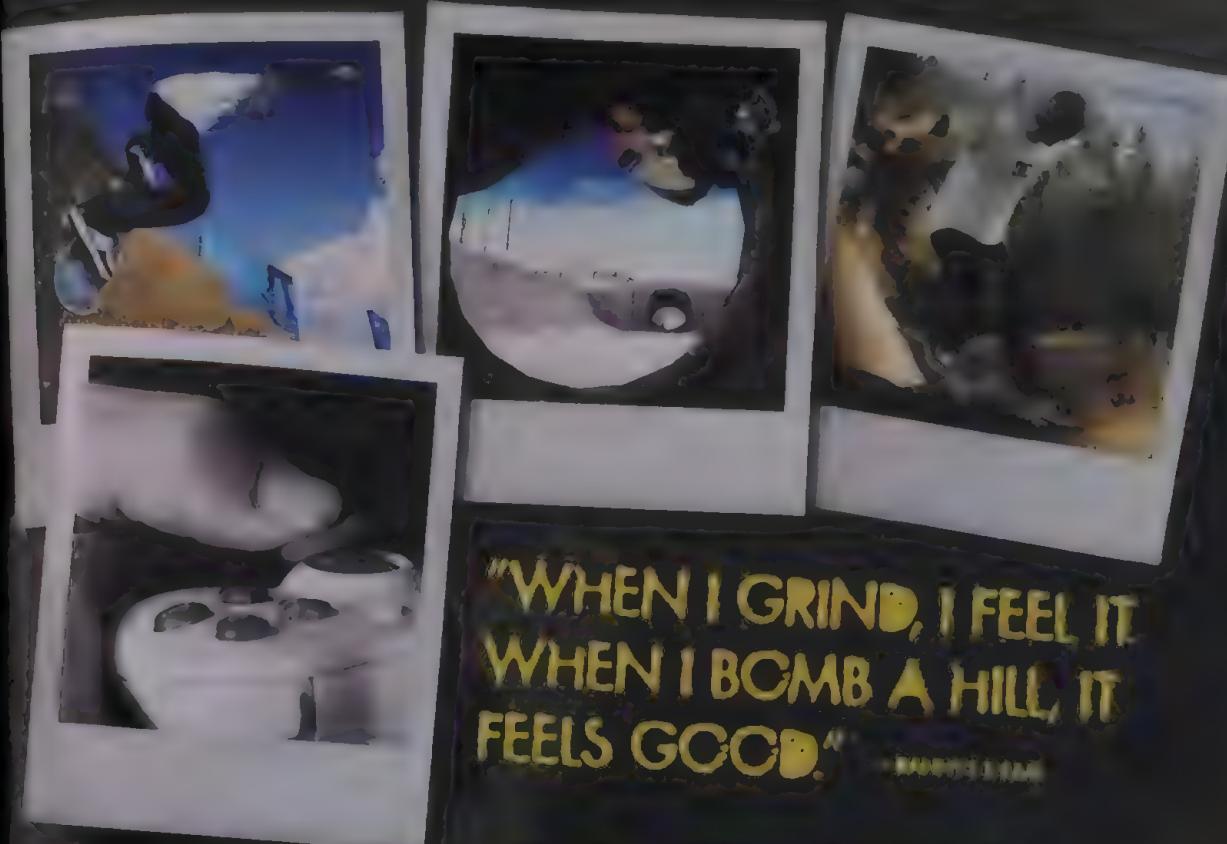
dt: That was a smooth transition. You're quite the journalist.

s: I went to a pretty fancy school.

dt: Obviously. Yeah, the gas feels, you know, just like skating. Or at least how Rest-of-Danny describes it. When I grind, I feel it. When I bomb a hill, it feels good.

s: Do you and Rest-of-Danny get along?

dt: Most of the time. Sometimes he goes little nuts and tries to pull crazy tricks and ends up crashing into stuff in



"WHEN I GRIND, I FEEL IT
WHEN I BOMB A HILL, IT
FEELS GOOD."

corrective surgery for it.

s: That's kinda mean.

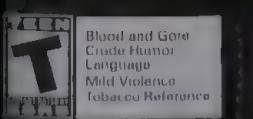
dt: You mean with the dog? I mean with the dog.

s: I'll have to remember that.

dt: Do.

skate.

LET YOUR LITTLE SKATER OUT.
skate.ea.com



A STEP FORWARD FOR SONY

NEW PSP AND PRICE CHANGE FOR PS3



Sony had little work cut out for it this year, not only in light of its competitors' performance, but due to the fact that the company noticeably stumbled at last year's E3. In some ways, this year's press conference was unremarkable in that Sony was talking about titles that we've already heard about and which have yet to come out for the system. But the company showed that it is trying to not only rectify some problems, but improve its situation as well.

The price of the PlayStation 3 has been a contentious topic ever since Sony debuted its two-SKU, higher-priced approach, but it was happy to announce a price cut for the platform. Well, sort of. Currently, the 60GB PS3 is selling for \$499, offering a discount of \$100, and replacing the 20GB model. Meanwhile, a new 80GB version bundled with MotorStorm will debut in August. While it's great the price of the 60GB PS3 was dropped, after the press conference, Sony clarified that this is being done only to clear out stock of that version. Once that sells out, there will only be one kind of PS3 available – the 80GB one at \$599. While it's hard to see Sony's strategy as a true price cut since once the 60GB sells out it's more accurate to say you're simply getting more for your money, this is certainly good news if you don't have the system and are interested in MotorStorm. "We found very early on," said Sony Computer Entertainment president and group CEO Kaz Hirai, "that consumers react mostly to having one SKU as opposed to two."

The PS3 arguably needs more games in its catalog than a change in price, however, and at the press conference Sony promised 120 new first and third-party titles in North America through the end of March 2008, including 15 first-party exclusives by this Christmas. Known quantities such

If you want longer life out of your new PSP, you can use your old battery if you buy a special kit with a new cover



as Ratchet & Clank Future, Uncharted: Drake's Fortune, Midway's Unreal Tournament III, and Ubisoft's Haze were highlighted, and everyone was impressed when Konami's Hideo Kojima took the stage and showed off a new trailer for Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots. It's customary for MGS trailers to wow audiences, but Kojima keeps outdoing himself.

Apart from these, new faces such as Gran Turismo 5 Prologue (out in Japan this October) and Infamous were also shown. GT 5 Prologue is clearly a holdover until we get a full-on GT 5, but it will have integrated online features including 16-player races. Although details were scarce, Sony did have a partnership to tout, announcing that MMO veteran NCsoft (Tabula Rasa) is granting the PS3 exclusive console rights to some future titles based on NCsoft existing franchises as well as new properties.

Sony is slowly offering downloadable titles for PlayStation Network, and one in particular – Echochrome from Sony Japan – made a big splash at the press conference and

the show. This title and others on the Network such as LittleBigPlanet and Pain are thankfully more than just classic re-releases or slight diversions, but given the effort and money put into them, it will be interesting to see if Sony runs into the same supply problems that Microsoft's Xbox Live Arcade has had.

The PSP was not neglected, and the system received its long-awaited makeover. While not a striking redesign, the handheld (which comes out in September) is now 33 percent lighter, 19 percent slimmer, and comes in two additional colors (silver and white). The new unit (which is still \$169.99) outputs content to your TV (provided it has inputs for component cables), allowing you to play PSP titles on your TV, watch UMD movies, and look at photos. If you buy a sold-separately battery cover, you can put your old PSP battery into the new PSP and get more playing time for your new handheld. Sony says that it plans to release 140 PSP games through the end of March, including God of War: Chains of Olympus, Castlevania: The Dracula X Chronicles, Silent Hill Origins, Syphon Filter: Logan's Shadow, and more. There are also two new PSP packs available (see sidebar for more details), one of which was introduced by Chewbacca – who is suspiciously the same height as Sony's president of worldwide studios Phil Harrison.

Just as Microsoft had ended its press conference the night before with its big FPS, Halo 3, Sony closed the proceedings with in-game footage of Killzone 2 (see page 74 for more). Although the footage didn't look exactly the same as the debut trailer from two years ago, Sony and developer Guerrilla Games put to rest any doubts that they could utilize the PS3 to produce some impressive-looking games.

For more on the games on Sony's platforms at E3, please check out our continuing coverage starting on page 34.



NEW PSP PACKS

Apart from the redesign of the PSP, there will be two PSP packs available this fall.

DAXTER PSP ENTERTAINMENT PACK

(September 10)

- Ice Silver PSP
- Daxter PSP game
- Family Guy – The Freakin' Sweet Collection UMD
- 1 GB Memory Stick PRO Duo
- Limited Edition/\$199



STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT PSP ENTERTAINMENT PACK

(October 9)

- Ceramic White PSP featuring silk-screened Darth Vader image (shown on previous page)
- Star Wars Battlefront: Renegade
- Gran Turismo 5 Prologue
- Limited Edition/\$199

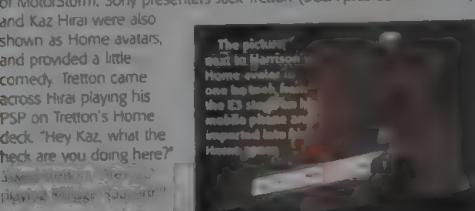
REPORT CARD

Sony achieved what it failed to do last E3. Instead of leaving consumers with questions and nagging doubts, the company reassured and excited its fanbase. Certainly, it's good to see its platforms gaining momentum despite past snafus. The PlayStation 3 is coming to life with software, the PSP is soldiering on against the goliath that is the Nintendo DS, and the Home community service and the PlayStation Network games show that Microsoft isn't the only company with an online plan. The company has always said that it has a long-term strategy for its products, and now we're starting to see it build a strong foundation for that execution.

Grade: B

HOME IMPROVEMENTS

Since it unveiled its Home community hub this spring, Sony has made some additions. An open-air square featuring a movie theater, bowling alley, and other locations replaces the indoor lounge of old, and Sony's president of worldwide studios, Phil Harrison walked around with his Home avatar. He showed off the ability to take pictures from a mobile phone and import them into your Home, as well as how elements of the free service (coming this fall) can be accessed via a social network web page. Harrison also showed how you can access your PS3 and PSN games directly from Home by jumping into an online multiplayer session of MotorStorm. Sony presenters Jack Tretton (SCEA president and CEO) and Kaz Hirai were also shown as Home avatars, and provided a little comedy. Tretton came across Hirai playing his PSP on Tretton's Home deck. "Hey Kaz, what the heck are you doing here?"





INTERVIEW

PETER DILLE

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF MARKETING, SONY

There's the perception that the Xbox 360, because it had a head start over Sony and Nintendo, is considered the first-priority console for third-party software, even if those games might appear on the PS3 as well. How do you combat that perception?

I think that's a fallacy. Perception, if it is even a perception, that's out there. It's a perception with the media. I can tell you that I don't believe it's a perception with third parties. I think third parties understand full well the momentum that PlayStation has. They believe in our platform historically and they're on board going forward. I think if you look at the rate of sale for 360 right now, they've been having some problems. You're seeing a decrease month-on-month for some of their sell-through for 360 versus a ramp up in PS3. So, having said that, the software that's coming out this year has been in development for some time. The people aren't changing their plans yet. I think, if anything, people will be shifting even more support behind PS3 based on that momentum.

Some people are disappointed that the price drop wasn't really technically a price drop, since once the 60GB SKU is gone from retail there will only be the one price point. What's your reaction to those complaints?

Well, let's try to boil this down in a simple way. It something used to cost \$600 and now it costs \$500, I think that's a price drop. In fact, I think it's a price drop of \$10!

But once the 60GB is out of stock, you're back to having to pay \$600.

What we've said is that there's ample supply of the 60GB. There's been some stuff coming out about our manufacturing plans, but the people that are doing that are not necessarily privy to what's actually transpired. What I can tell you is that there's still a lot of 60GB models out there. If people want to buy them, they're ready to sell them one. There's still a lot of 60GB models out there.

Given your current rate of sale, do you have any projections as to how long you will have 60GB models in stock?

It's hard to project. We've got a lot of different factors that go into that. One is the rate of sale. Another is the rate of new models coming in. Right now, we've got a lot of 60GB models in stock. We've got a lot of 60GB models in the pipeline. We've got a lot of 60GB models in the backlog. We've got a lot of 60GB models in the 60GB model.

Given the resources that you're putting into triple-A PlayStation Network games like LittleBigPlanet, are you going to be better about scheduling and promoting these games than Xbox Live Arcade? Some people complain that XBLA games come out erratically and there are often dead periods without much new content.

Well, I don't want to comment on XBLA.

But, I think that we have over

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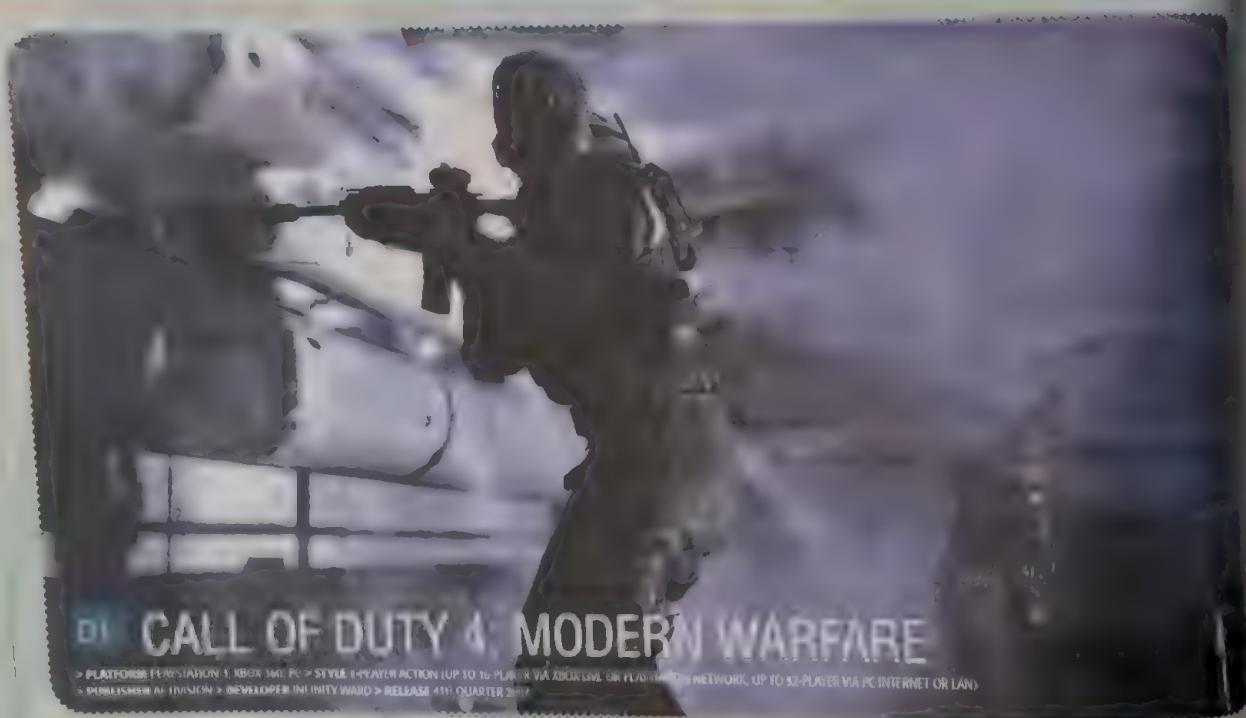
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ELECTRONIC
GAMING

TOP 50 GAMES OF E3

Even though this year's E3 saw some drastic changes in format, it didn't shift its focus from the games. There may have been fewer mind-blowing announcements, but it is impossible to deny that the titles on display still gave gamers a lot to look forward to in the coming months. Even with so many high-quality games on the horizon, sifting through every first-person shooter and RPG can be a daunting task. That's why we've compiled our picks for the year's hottest games off the show floor.

the burning questions about the big games.
Read on if you want to know what got people talking and why.



CALL OF DUTY 4: MODERN WARFARE

> PLATFORM PLAYSTATION 3, XBOX 360, PC > STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION UP TO 16-PLAYER VIA XBOX LIVE OR PLAYSTATION NETWORK, UP TO 32-PLAYER VIA PC INTERNET OR LAN

Even though the show floor was dominated by the new generation of gaming, one title still managed to stand out: Call of Duty 4: Modern Warfare. The game's gritty vision of Modern Warfare is a globe and intense

How It's Hot > Each and every level of this game is frighteningly explosive from the array of armaments to the heart-pounding soundtrack. The game may be the talk of the show floor at E3, but playing and experiencing Modern Warfare can deliver a dominant experience that no other game may have no match

How It Stacks Up > In a year with Halo 3 and Grand Theft Auto 4, it's hard to believe that Call of Duty 4 is the talk of the show floor. But out of this year's E3, but playing and experiencing Modern Warfare can deliver a dominant experience that no other game may have no match

02 HALO 3

> PLATFORM XBOX 360 > STYLE 1-PLAYER SHOOTER > PUBLISHER MICROSOFT GAME STUDIOS > DEVELOPER BUNGIE > RELEASE SEPTEMBER 2007

What It Is » Microsoft's Bungie continues its halo run with the third installment of its signature franchise. Halo 3 promises to resolve all the big questions left behind from the second part's cliffhanger ending. Huge-scale conflicts are the order of the day, and the game looks like it's going a long way from the original's "Redmond" feel.

Why It's Hot » Master Chief and Cortana are back, along with the return of the Flood. With a back-to-back release, the game has the potential to become a huge money-maker. The game looks like it's going to be a must-play for anyone who wants to see what the future of console gaming looks like.

How It Stacks Up > After seeing an extended demo of the game, it's clear that the developer has delivered on its promise. In the FPS category it will be hard to beat. But this year Microsoft must pull out some big surprises to stand up to the competition's modern weapons of warfare.



03 ROCK BAND

> PLATFORM XBOX 360, PLAYSTATION 3, PC > STYLE MUSIC SIMULATOR > PUBLISHER THUMBS UP! > DEVELOPER THUMBS UP!

What It Is » Your turn! In the beginning, Rock Band is just another rhythm game. But as you play, you'll start to realize your song fantasies — guitars included.

Why It's Hot > All about the online this time, the game lets you play with your buddies all across the country or piling up the hundreds of songs that will show up as downloadable content in the first year, including hits from current artists like Metallica and Bruce Springsteen.

How It Stacks Up > This is the definitive game of 2008: we'll eat our plastic guitars. The fun factor is off the charts, and it's possible that the guitar lines took a hit in the last game. But the guitars, which are emerging as the choice for the solo shredder, will be better than ever. And the guitars, like Obi-Wan, are more powerful than you.

04 MASS EFFECT

> PLATFORM XBOX 360 > STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION/RPG > PUBLISHER MICROSOFT GAME STUDIOS > DEVELOPER BIOWARE > RELEASE NOVEMBER

What It Is » Imagine what would happen if one of the most highly acclaimed RPG houses implemented Gears of War-like combat into a game that spanned the entire universe. That's exactly what BioWare has done with Mass Effect.

Why It's Hot > Battles usually unfold with the player using the roadie run to reach cover then blindly firing over the top at a group of robotic adversaries. If that fails, a powerful Force-like push is in order.

How It Stacks Up > The good people at BioWare know exactly what nerds want. Who in their right mind can turn down science fiction, big guns, gorgeous graphics, and loads of customization?



05 LITTLEBIGPLANET

> PLATFORM PLAYSTATION 3 > STYLE 1-PLAYER ADVENTURE > PUBLISHER SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT ASIA > DEVELOPER SUMO DIGITAL > RELEASE

What It Is » LittleBigPlanet is basically a do-it-yourself platformer. Gamers can use in-game tools to create objects, and the onscreen character interacts with them to get around obstacles and complete challenges. The physics are very believable according to their size and composition.

Why It's Hot > LittleBigPlanet is the kind of game that's sure to bring out the inner child in everyone. It's a great way to let your imagination run wild, and it's sure to be a hit with kids and adults alike.

How It Stacks Up > If this is the kind of original, imaginative offerings gamers can look forward to on the PlayStation Network, it makes Xbox Live Arcade titles look pretty primitive by comparison. Even in the face of Killzone 2 and Metal Gear Solid 4, this was the PS3 exclusive everyone was talking about at E3.



06 KILLZONE 2

> PLATFORM
> PUBLISHER
> RELEASE



07 FALLOUT 3

> PLATFORM
> PUBLISHER
> RELEASE



08 GRAND THEFT AUTO IV

> PLATFORM
> DEVELOPER
> STYLE
> RELEASE

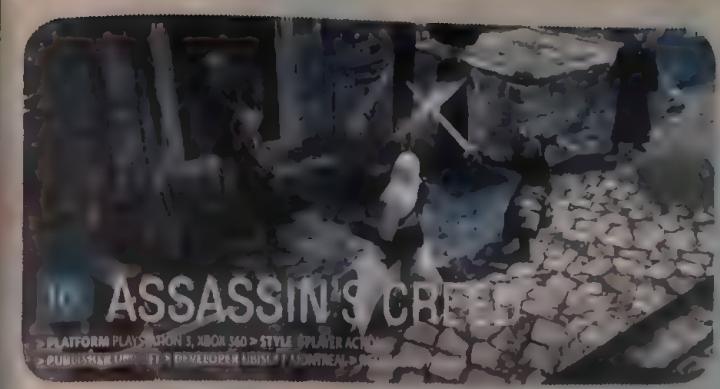
There's a lot of pressure on Rockstar to deliver a game that lives up to the hype. No one of the game's creators has ever been asked to make a game with so much firepower in its gameplay, and it's clear that they're up to the task. The game looks like it will be a mix of action and adventure, with a focus on exploration and combat.

It's clear that the team behind the game is determined to deliver a game that lives up to the hype.

It's clear that the team behind the game is determined to deliver a game that lives up to the hype.

09 SUPER MARIO GALAXY

> PLATFORM
> DEVELOPER
> STYLE
> RELEASE



10 ASSASSIN'S CREED

> PLATFORM
> PUBLISHER
> DEVELOPER
> RELEASE

What It Is Tour the ancient holy lands of the Third Crusade as a sword-and-dagger-toting killer who is far more than he appears. Climb walls, leap between rooftops, and meld into the crowd in a refreshing take on the open-world concept.

Why It's Hot The makers of Prince of Persia have incorporated so many new ideas into this game it's hard to know where to start, from a marionette-style control scheme to the remarkable animations apparent in movement and combat. There's also a pretty huge surprise about what is really happening in the story, but we wouldn't dare spoil it for you.

How It Stacks Up It's hard to argue that any other game this year will innovate in as many ways as Assassin's Creed. With that said, the team has some work ahead to smooth out some rough edges before the planned July release.

11 THE LEGEND OF ZELDA: PHANTOM HOURGLASS

> PLATFORM
> PUBLISHER
> DEVELOPER
> RELEASE

What It Is Though technically a sequel to Wind Waker, Phantom Hourglass is a classic top-down Zelda for the DS in the tradition of A Link to the Past.

Why It's Hot People get excited for Zeldas no matter what, but this one will use the DS to its fullest, movement is handled exclusively by the touch screen, and you blow in the wind.

How It Stacks Up Our concerns about the control scheme melted away after some hands-on time, but it is strange that there are no options allowing use of the d-pad controls.



12 METAL GEAR SOLID 4: GUNS OF THE PATRIOTS

> PLATFORM
> PUBLISHER
> DEVELOPER
> RELEASE

What It Is Guns of the Patriots is the final installment in the Metal Gear Solid series, and promises to answer all of the big questions. It's also the first Metal Gear game to feature video keyframe, but we'll find out about that before.

Why It's Hot Stunning graphics and exciting cinematics make MGS 4 the feather in Sony's PS3 exclusive cap. Oh, and Snake might die.

How It Stacks Up The trailer at E3 was awesome, and the play we've seen looks like a great evolution for the franchise.

13 GUITAR HERO III: LEGENDS OF ROCK

> PLATFORM
> PUBLISHER
> DEVELOPER

What It Is This follow-up to the wildly popular Guitar Hero series delivers one amazing list of tracks, with most being master tracks from the original artists. Red Octane even so far as to sign Slash (of Guns N' Roses fame, duh!) for a head-to-head boss battle against the guitar legend. He will also be contributing an original track.

Why It's Hot We played this one for hours at E3 and we couldn't help but be impressed with all the work Neversoft has done to make sure Guitar Hero 3 more than delivers this fall. When asked about a Metallica appearance the team couldn't talk, but they did mention it'd be cool if they could get "Enter Sandman" on the track. You know, ONE.

How It Stacks Up Sure, Rock Band announced tons of tracks and a full band, but for the Guitar Hero fanatic, this new edition delivered the best tracks at the show. And it's important to note that it's a fun and challenging to play Guitar Hero masters and amateurs alike will find plenty to love here.



14 RATCHET & CLANK FUTURE

> PLATFORM
> PUBLISHER
> DEVELOPER
> RELEASE

What It Is Insomniac's brand of wacky gun-toting platforming, with a splash of RPG flair, is in full swing for this fifth entry in the Ratchet series.

Why It's Hot From being able to turn enemies into top hat-wearing penguins to forcing robots to dance to a funky beat, Ratchet's weapon list has always been the series' highlight and Future doesn't look to disappoint.

How It Stacks Up There was some talk at the show about how Future didn't look very innovative compared to previous entries, but when you are talking about a no-mas series from one of the industry's top developers,



15 SUPER SMASH BROS BRAWL

> PLATFORM
> PUBLISHER
> DEVELOPER
> RELEASE

What It Is The smash hit game returns for the Nintendo Wii, featuring a host of new characters and weapons.

Why It's Hot Smash Bros. is like the ultimate collection of awesome. If it were a movie, it'd be a Godfather remake set in the Star Wars universe starring Spider-Man and the Terminator.

How It Stacks Up Not much new information available at the show. We do finally have a release date, but December 3rd feels like such a long way away.



16 RESIDENT EVIL 5

> PLATFORM: PS3, XBOX 360 > STYLE: PLAYER ACTION > PUBLISHER: CAPCOM > DEVELOPER: REEDPOP GAMES > RELEASE: 2009

What It Is » Former S.T.A.R.S. member Chris Redfield returns to the swamps of Raccoon City to combat a group of zombie-like creatures in some of the most gory zombie-like creatures in some of the most gory scenes ever.**Why It's Hot** » Impressive when the only thing shown is a trailer featuring no actual game mechanics, but things at the show look like they'll be solid.**How It Stacks Up** » The Resident Evil franchise has had its ups and downs, but it's been on a roll since the last few entries.**17 HALO WARS**

> PLATFORM: XBOX 360 > STYLE: PLAYER STRATEGY > PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT GAME STUDIOS > DEVELOPER: ENSEMBLE STUDIOS > RELEASE: 2009

What It Is » The first Halo game for the console generation, and the first to feature a campaign mode.**18 UNREAL
TOURNAMENT III**

> PLATFORM: PLAYSTATION 3, PC, XBOX 360 (IN 2009) > STYLE: 1-PLAYER (REK TBA) > PUBLISHER: INXAY > DEVELOPER: FUSION

before there was Gears of War, there was Unreal Tournament. Now, there's Unreal Tournament III.**What It Is** » There's a lot more to say about this than there is about the other games on this list, but we'll just say that it's a solid entry in the series.**Why It's Hot** » And while it's not quite as good as Epic Games' Gears of War, it's still a solid game to none. For the first time ever, the PlayStation 3 edition will be compatible with the PC version, so you can play with your community using the same weapons and gear.**19 STARCRAFT II**

> PLATFORM: PC > STYLE: 1-PLAYER STRATEGY (MULTIPLAYER) > PUBLISHER: BIZZARD ENTERTAINMENT > DEVELOPER: BIZZARD ENTERTAINMENT > RELEASE: 2009

What It Is » The successor to the critically acclaimed game of all time.**Why It's Hot** » StarCraft II looks to maintain the feel of the original, but also add a bunch of tanks.**How It Stacks Up** » It's StarCraft II, so it's bound to be good. The developer, along with half of California, seems to think so, too.**20 METROID PRIME 3:
CORRUPTION**

> PLATFORM: WII > STYLE: 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE > PUBLISHER: NINTENDO > DEVELOPER: RETRO STUDIOS INC > RELEASE: AUTUMN 2008

What It Is » Corruption isn't just a first-person shooter; it's also an adventure, and platform game. Developer Retro Studios (which made the two previous Prime games, and it doesn't look like they'll be the third time).**Why It's Hot** » With graphics that belong on one of the other next-gen consoles perfectly tweaked for the Wii, we can't wait to see how well it stacks up.**How It Stacks Up** » Nintendo claims that this could be the best Metroid game in years. In a year with COD 4 and Call of Duty: World at War, but after what we've seen, we're not so sure.**21 GOD OF WAR:
CHAINS OF OLYMPUS**

> PLATFORM: PSP > STYLE: 1-PLAYER ACTION > PUBLISHER: SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT > DEVELOPER: READ AT DAWN > RELEASE: NOVEMBER 2008

What It Is » The God of War prequel leads players on an adventure with Kratos, where he battles the first God of War titles.**Why It's Hot** » It's got lots of mythological beasts, and Kratos' first true love, the Ghost of Sparta.**How It Stacks Up** » If Chains of Olympus could pass for a PS2 title, it would be a solid A+ game. As it stands, we're not sure if it's better or worse than the original.**22 BROTHERS IN ARMS:
HELL'S HIGHWAY**

> PLATFORM: PLAYSTATION 3, XBOX 360 > STYLE: 1-PLAYER (TACTICAL SHOOTER) > PUBLISHER: UBISOFT > DEVELOPER: GEARBOX SOFTWARE > RELEASE: 2009

What It Is » The first next-gen entry in the WWI tactical shooter series, which takes great advantage of the power of the new generation of consoles.**Why It's Hot** » The expansive environmental destruction lets you experience the series' hallmark strategic gameplay in a new way.**How It Stacks Up** » It's not quite as visually interesting than Ghost Recon and modern warfare, but it's a hugely promising title.**23 STAR WARS:
THE FORCE UNLEASHED**

> PLATFORM: PLAYSTATION 3, XBOX 360 > STYLE: 1-PLAYER (ACTION) > PUBLISHER: LUCASFILM GAMES > DEVELOPER: LUCASARTS > RELEASE: 2009

What It Is » The Force Unleashed is a single-player action game set in the Star Wars universe.**Why It's Hot** » It's Star Wars, and it's LucasArts, so it's bound to be good.**How It Stacks Up** » The game looks solid, and the game play looks promising. We have some worries about the null-G sections, though.**24 BURNOUT PARADISE**

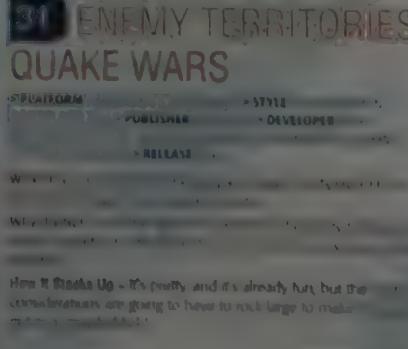
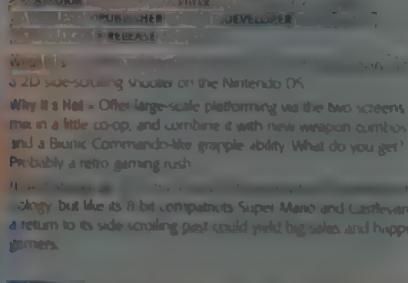
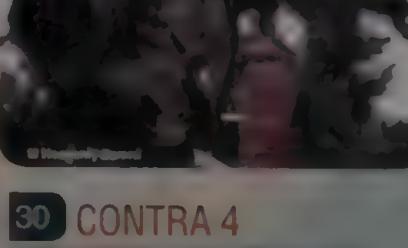
> PLATFORM: PLAYSTATION 3, XBOX 360 > STYLE: 1-PLAYER RACING (UP TO 6-PLAYER VIA PLAYSTATION NETWORK OR XBOX LIVE) > PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS > DEVELOPER: CRITERION GAMES > RELEASE: JANUARY 2009

What It Is » If the Burnout series is about anything other than racing, it's about wrecking, and with Paradise – the first Burnout developed exclusively for next-gen – the crashes look better than ever.**Why It's Hot** » Welcome to Paradise City, Burnout's hub world. You won't be picking challenges from a list; driving to your next race is half the game's fun.**How It Stacks Up** » The lack of a Crash Mode has us a little worried, but Criterion is convinced that Showtime Mode will fill that gap.**25 MARIO KART: WII
WORKERS EDITION**

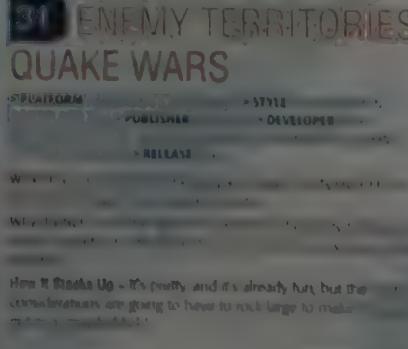
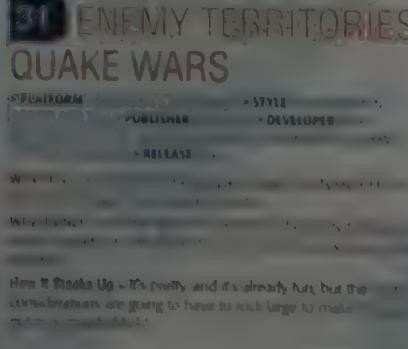
> PLATFORM: WII > STYLE: 1-PLAYER RACING > PUBLISHER: NINTENDO > DEVELOPER: NINTENDO GAMEWORKS > RELEASE: 2009

What It Is » Mario Kart: Workers Edition is the Mario Kart GameCube game, but Nintendo has never disappointed with its porting.**Why It's Hot** » Mario Kart: Workers Edition is the Mario Kart GameCube game, but Nintendo has never disappointed with its porting.**How It Stacks Up** » Outstanding track record buys it a free pass for now.**26 HEAVENLY SWORD**

> PLATFORM: XBOX 360 > STYLE: 3RD-PERSON ACTION/ADVENTURE > PUBLISHER: MICROSOFT GAME STUDIOS > DEVELOPER: MONSTER SPIDER STUDIO > RELEASE: 2009

What It Is » Heavenly Sword is the spiritual successor to Devil May Cry.**27 CRYYSIS**

> PLATFORM: PC > STYLE: 1-PLAYER ACTION (MULTIPLAYER TBA) > PUBLISHER: ELECTRONIC ARTS > DEVELOPER: CRYTEK > RELEASE: Q4 2008

What It Is » Crysis is the first CryEngine 3 game, and it's a massive leap forward in terms of graphics.**Why It's Hot** » Crysis is the first CryEngine 3 game, and it's a massive leap forward in terms of graphics.**How It Stacks Up** » The game looks solid, and the game play looks promising. We have some worries about the null-G sections, though.



32 HELLGATE: LONDON

> PLATFORM PC > STYLE 3-PLAYER ACTION > PUBLISHER THQ > DEVELOPER THQ
> RELEASE Q4 2008

What It Is - The developer of the first Hellgate game has returned to create a new one. This time, the evil corporation takes over and outlaws all color from the world. You're a色盲 (colorblind) player who has to find ways to fight back.

Why It's Hot - The game looks like it will have some interesting effects and then bonus levels.

How It Stacks Up - We're happy to see people putting some effort into colorblindness and good controls. With its unique approach to gameplay, de Blob could appeal to fans of the original game.

33 RAYMAN RAVING RABBIDS 2

> PLATFORM PC > STYLE 3-PLAYER ACTION > PUBLISHER THQ
> DEVELOPER THQ > RELEASE Q4 2008

What It Is - The developer of the first Hellgate game has returned to create a new one. This time, the evil corporation takes over and outlaws all color from the world. You're a色盲 (colorblind) player who has to find ways to fight back.

Why It's Hot - The game looks like it will have some interesting effects and then bonus levels.

How It Stacks Up - We're happy to see people putting some effort into colorblindness and good controls. With its unique approach to gameplay, de Blob could appeal to fans of the original game.

34 CIVILIZATION REVOLUTION

> PLATFORM PC > STYLE 3-PLAYER ACTION > PUBLISHER THQ > DEVELOPER THQ
> RELEASE Q4 2008

What It Is - A continuation of the long-running Civilization franchise, with a mix of strategy, real-time strategy, and visual.

Why It's Hot - The addition of online play and a few balance tweaks are enough to have us anxious to get our hands on this.

How It Stacks Up - This is the fighting game to watch for everyone besides the "I'm not a fighter" so much better than anything else" crowd.

35 WARHAWK

> PLATFORM PC > STYLE 3-PLAYER ACTION > PUBLISHER THQ > DEVELOPER THQ
> RELEASE Q4 2008

What It Is - The developer of the first Hellgate game has returned to create a new one. This time, the evil corporation takes over and outlaws all color from the world. You're a色盲 (colorblind) player who has to find ways to fight back.

Why It's Hot - The game looks like it will have some interesting effects and then bonus levels.

How It Stacks Up - We're happy to see people putting some effort into colorblindness and good controls. With its unique approach to gameplay, de Blob could appeal to fans of the original game.



36 DE BLOB

> PLATFORM PC > STYLE 3-PLAYER ACTION > PUBLISHER THQ > DEVELOPER THQ
> RELEASE Q4 2008

What It Is - The developer of the first Hellgate game has returned to create a new one. This time, the evil corporation takes over and outlaws all color from the world. You're a色盲 (colorblind) player who has to find ways to fight back.

Why It's Hot - The game looks like it will have some interesting effects and then bonus levels.

How It Stacks Up - We're happy to see people putting some effort into colorblindness and good controls. With its unique approach to gameplay, de Blob could appeal to fans of the original game.

37 FABLE 2

> PLATFORM PC > STYLE 3-PLAYER ACTION/RPG (MULTIPLAYER TBD) > PUBLISHER THQ
> DEVELOPER LIONHEAD STUDIOS > RELEASE 2008

What It Is - The developer of the first Hellgate game has returned to create a new one. This time, the evil corporation takes over and outlaws all color from the world. You're a色盲 (colorblind) player who has to find ways to fight back.

Why It's Hot - It's a parody game with no direct ties to the film, and is loaded with obscure references to the show and tongue-in-cheek jokes.

How It Stacks Up - The game itself needs some tuning, but the humor and satirical tone are spot on.

38 SOULCALIBUR IV

> PLATFORM PLAYSTATION 3, XBOX 360 > STYLE 3-PLAYER FIGHTING (ONLINE TBD) > PUBLISHER NAMCO BANDAI > DEVELOPER NAMCO BANDAI > RELEASE 2008

What It Is - A continuation of the long-running fighting franchise, with a mix of strategy, real-time strategy, and visual.

Why It's Hot - The addition of online play and a few balance tweaks are enough to have us anxious to get our hands on this.

How It Stacks Up - This is the fighting game to watch for everyone besides the "I'm not a fighter" so much better than anything else" crowd.

39 INFAMOUS

> PLATFORM PS3 > STYLE 3-PLAYER ACTION (MULTIPLAYER TBD) > PUBLISHER SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT > DEVELOPER SUCKER PUNCH
> RELEASE Q4 2008

What It Is - Following the same path of Naughty Dog's Uncharted series, Infamous is taking a stab at a more realistic, action-oriented game.

Why It's Hot - It may look like an average Jile, but you actually have to fight. And it sounds like you can do it in mid-air (throwing enemies, destroying people, etc.) and it looks like they're doing a lot of damage.

How It Stacks Up - It may seem like a unique game, but it actually follows in the footsteps of the last month's cover story. It'll be interesting to see how the other big super hero games differ in the end.

40 EVERYDAY SHOOTER

> PLATFORM PLAYSTATION 3 > STYLE 3-PLAYER SHOOTER > PUBLISHER SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT > DEVELOPER QUESY GAMES > RELEASE 2008

What It Is - A collection of shooter games in the vein of Robotron or Contra, but with some added music game elements.

Why It's Hot - The version received some critical acclaim, and now players will be able to check out the game for themselves when the PlayStation 3 launches.

How It Stacks Up - It's a collection of shooters. Everyday is entrancing and relies on a similar visual effect, and each level will require a different approach.



41 THE SIMPSONS GAME

> PLATFORM PLAYSTATION 3, XBOX 360 > STYLE 3-PLAYER ACTION > PUBLISHER ELECTRONIC ARTS > DEVELOPER EA REDWOOD SHORES > RELEASE WINTER

What It Is - Four playable family members battle their way through familiar characters and locations in a cel-shaded Springfield.

Why It's Hot - It's a parody game with no direct ties to the film, and is loaded with obscure references to the show and tongue-in-cheek jokes.

How It Stacks Up - The game itself needs some tuning, but the humor and satirical tone are spot on.

42 DEVIL MAY CRY 4

> PLATFORM PLAYSTATION 3, XBOX 360 > STYLE 3-PLAYER ACTION > PUBLISHER CAPCOM > DEVELOPER CAPCOM > RELEASE WINTER

What It Is - The fourth installment in this stylish action series features a new hero and goes multiplatform for the first time.

Why It's Hot - The Devil Bringer expands the old gun-and-sword formula by adding throws and grabs to your arsenal. Producer Hiroyuki Kobayashi was the mind behind Resident Evil 4 and the original DMC.

How It Stacks Up - Controls are more fluid than ever before, but the visuals haven't evolved to the same degree.

43 HAZE

> PLATFORM PLAYSTATION 3 > STYLE 3-PLAYER ACTION (UP TO 24-PLAYER TD) > PUBLISHER UBIQUITOUS > DEVELOPER FREE RADICAL > RELEASE NOVEMBER

What It Is - TimeSplitters developer Free Radical's take on a futuristic war fueled by bombastic weaponry and drug-addled soldiers.

Why It's Hot - Haze features four-player co-op throughout the campaign and sees you switching sides in mid-war, giving you the best of both worlds in terms of weaponry. The Nectar drug allows your soldier to go into a killing frenzy upon the push of a button.

How It Stacks Up - The dynamic, non-scripted AI should help Haze stand out from the pack, and making it a PS3 exclusive for the holiday gives it more of a fighting chance than going against Halo 3 on the Xbox 360.

44 PROJECT GOTHAM 4

> PLATFORM XBOX 360 > STYLE 3-PLAYER RACING (MULTIPLAYER TBD) > PUBLISHER MICROSOFT GAME STUDIOS > DEVELOPER BIZARRE CREATIONS > RELEASE SEPTEMBER

What It Is - If you've driven in a heavy storm before, you know how dangerous it can be. Changing weather is one of the aspects that really sets this next iteration so enticing. We also like the idea of bikes in cars.

Why It's Hot - Racing fans around E3 could be heard saying, "did you see how the rain rolls off of the car?" This game is a visual knockout, and the variety that the weather and terrain variations add to the gameplay should make it one hell of a ride as well.

How It Stacks Up - With Forza and Gran Turismo cornering the simulation market, Project Gotham has all of the elements needed to pave its own path and steer clear of the traffic jam.

45 TABULA RASA

> PLATFORM PC > STYLE 3-PLAYER MMORPG (MULTIPLAYER TBD) > PUBLISHER INNOVATION STUDIO > DEVELOPER DESTINATION GAMES > RELEASE 2008

What It Is - It's been pitched as a kind of "World of Warcraft" with the credit card Ultima Online.

Why It's Hot - It's a game that's been talked about for years, and it's finally coming to fruition.

How It Stacks Up - It's a vastly different design than traditional MMOs, but this has the potential to be something special.

46 WORLD IN CONFLICT

> PLATFORM PC > STYLE 3-PLAYER STRATEGY > PUBLISHER THQ > DEVELOPER THQ > RELEASE Q4 2008

What It Is - A beautiful tactical real-time strategy predicated on a modern conflict.

Why It's Hot - It's a RTS that's been designed with a focus on strategy.

How It Stacks Up - The Ground Control-esque design makes this an odd duck in the RTS space, but we dig its off-beat sensibilities.

47 PATAPON

> PLATFORM PSP > STYLE 3-PLAYER ACTION > PUBLISHER 7A > DEVELOPER 7A > RELEASE Q4 2008

What It Is - A rhythm-based action game that requires rhythmic button pressing in the action.

Why It's Hot - Did you like Loco Roco? Then get ready, because Patapon is being handled by the same development team.

How It Stacks Up - We love the game's artistic style: simple shapes and silhouettes. It's basic, but it is implemented very well.

48 FRACTURE

> PLATFORM PLAYSTATION 3, XBOX 360 > STYLE 3-PLAYER ACTION > PUBLISHER LUCASARTS > DEVELOPER DAY 1 STUDIOS > RELEASE 2008

What It Is - Using weapons that modify terrain to suit their needs, soldiers of the future fight for your freedom.

Why It's Hot - The thrill of looking over the scarred, deformed battlefield after a heated deathmatch is a sensation gamers won't find anywhere else.

How It Stacks Up - We enjoyed the frantic multiplayer matches we played, but have yet to see if the game can maintain the intensity in single-player.

49 THRILLVILLE: OFF THE RAILS

> PLATFORM PLAYSTATION 3, XBOX 360 > STYLE 3-PLAYER SIMULATION > PUBLISHER THQ > DEVELOPER DAY 1 STUDIOS > RELEASE 2008

What It Is - Last year's best-selling original children's intellectual property returns in a big, big way with the introduction of death-defying Whoa Coasters, the longest roller coasters ever built.

Why It's Hot - There's something charming about having the ability to build coasters that so outrageous that guests either fly off them or lose their lunches. The multiplayer minigames are also looking quite fun.

How It Stacks Up - There's little else out there that grants players such a sense of accomplishment.

50 SMARTY PANTS

> PLATFORM PC > STYLE 3-PLAYER EDUCATIONAL > PUBLISHER INNOVATION STUDIO > DEVELOPER DESTINATION GAMES > RELEASE 2008

What It Is - This quirky trivia game has up to four players wildly swinging their remotes as they raise their hands to answer spin game-show-style wheel.

Why It's Hot - It's a game that's been talked about for years, and it's finally coming to fruition.

How It Stacks Up - With Forza and Gran Turismo cornering the simulation market, Project Gotham has all of the elements needed to pave its own path and steer clear of the traffic jam.

51 TABULA RASA

> PLATFORM PC > STYLE 3-PLAYER MMORPG (MULTIPLAYER TBD) > PUBLISHER INNOVATION STUDIO > DEVELOPER DESTINATION GAMES > RELEASE 2008

What It Is - It's been pitched as a kind of "World of Warcraft" with the credit card Ultima Online.

Why It's Hot - It's a game that's been talked about for years, and it's finally coming to fruition.

How It Stacks Up - It's a vastly different design than traditional MMOs, but this has the potential to be something special.

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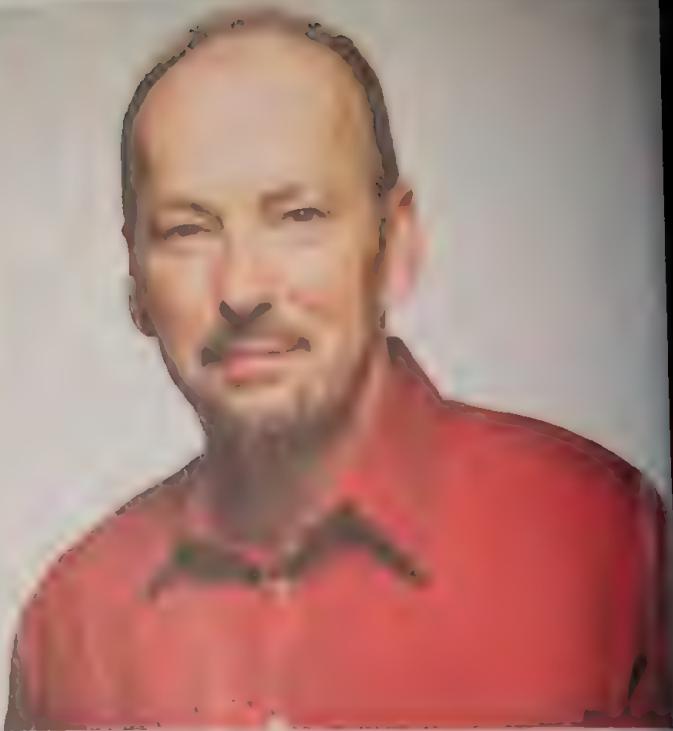
65 TABULA RASA

> PLATFORM PC > STYLE 3-PLAYER MMORPG (MULTIPLAYER TBD) > PUBLISHER INNOVATION STUDIO > DEVELOPER DESTINATION GAMES > RELEASE 2008

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SHOULD GAMES HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE AO?

The video game industry is faced with a number of difficult questions and many ways to look at them. In Game Informer's debate section, we attempt to analyze these scenarios from different angles. Like a typical debate club, our editors have been assigned to defend a position whether or not it agrees with their personal views. In this edition, we take a closer look at the ESRB's AO rating and the viability of restrictions that come along with it.



AO GAMES HAVE JUST AS MUCH OF A RIGHT to exist

As a debate begins, it's important to understand what each side stands for. In this case, the PRO side believes that AO games have just as much of a right to exist as any other rating. They believe that AO games are a valid form of entertainment and that they should be allowed to exist without restrictions. They also believe that AO games can be enjoyed by all ages if they are played responsibly. The CON side, on the other hand, believes that AO games are inappropriate for children and should be restricted. They believe that AO games contain content that is too violent, sexual, or otherwise inappropriate for children to consume. They also believe that AO games can be enjoyed by adults but not children.



THE KISS OF DEATH (AO) IS A VITAL PART OF THE INDUSTRY

The debate over AO games is a complex one, with both sides having valid points. The PRO side argues that AO games are a valid form of entertainment and should be allowed to exist without restrictions. The CON side argues that AO games contain content that is inappropriate for children and should be restricted. Ultimately, the decision on whether or not AO games should be allowed to exist will depend on individual beliefs and values.

THE OFFICIAL EXPANSION PACK OF MEDIEVAL II: TOTAL WAR



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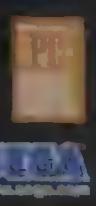
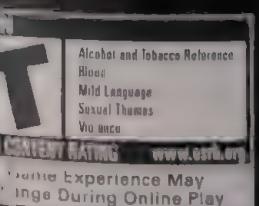


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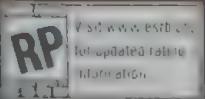
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Apparently skulls never go out of style. After all, the Punisher has been rocking the look since the '70s. We hope this young PC maker, War Machine, is able to stick around just as long, because they make some quality hardware. We especially like how quiet the liquid cooling is in this powerful rig. The Elite's chassis has some nice features and is easy to customize - we only wish it wasn't so ridiculously huge. It scored just under some of the other PCs we have recently tested: 3DMark05 benchmarked at 11783 and PCMark05 scored a 7735. With its Dual XFX Nvidia 8800 Ultra video cards, this War Machine ran the F.E.A.R. framerate benchmark flawlessly, never dipping under 40 frames per second even at maximum settings.

War Machine is not a bad option for those looking for a high-end PC.

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VIDEO GAMES IN SCHOOLS?

SOME PRACTICAL ADVICE FOR TEACHERS AND STUDENTS

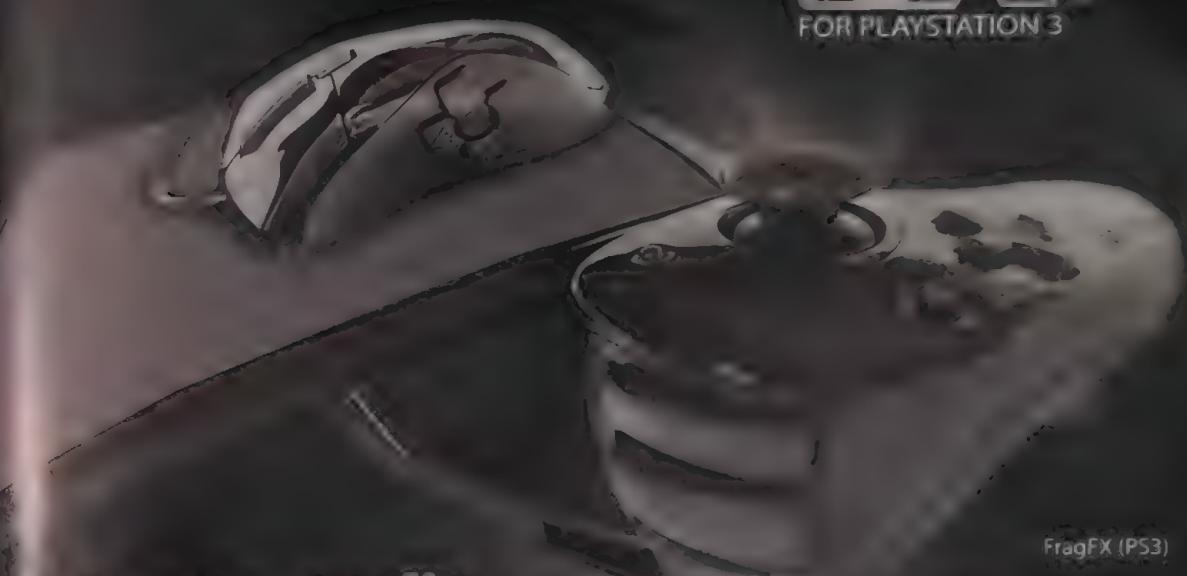
BY DAVID HUTCHISON, Ph.D.
AUTHOR, *PLAYING TO LEARN:
VIDEO GAMES IN THE CLASSROOM*



the first time in the history of the country. The
first meeting was held at the home of Mr. W. H.
Farrington, and the name of the organization
was chosen by Mr. J. C. Johnson, who said,
"Let us call it the 'Liberator'." The name
was adopted, and the organization was
incorporated under the laws of the state, and
the name "Liberator" was registered as a
trade mark. The name was chosen because
it was the name of the paper which was
published in Boston, and which was the
organ of the abolitionists.

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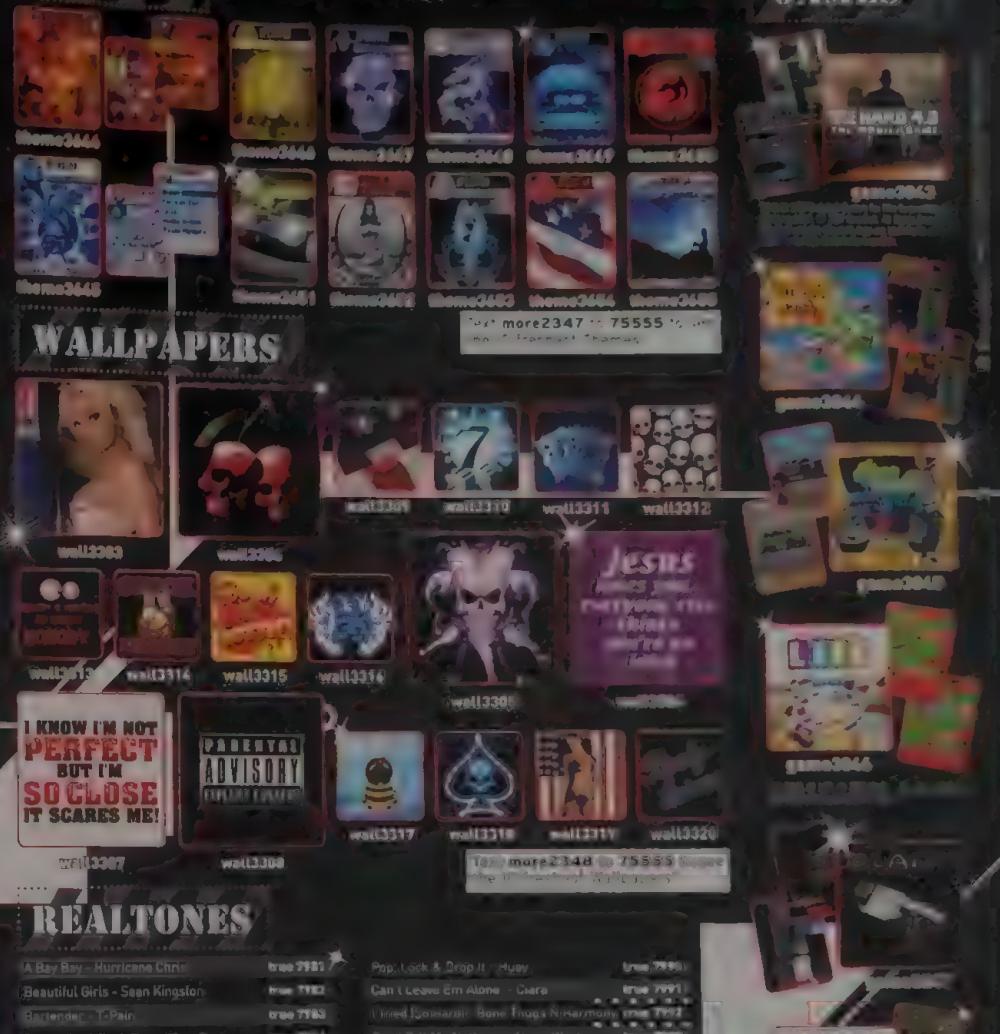
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THEMES



REALTONES

- | | | | |
|--|-----------|--|-----------|
| A Bay Bay - Hurricane Chris | True 7981 | Pop, Lock & Drop It - Muay | True 7981 |
| Beautiful Girls - Sean Kingston | True 7982 | Can I Leave Em Alone - Ciara | True 7981 |
| Bartender - T-Pain | True 7983 | Lilited (feat. Lil Wayne) - Bone Thugs N Harmony | True 7981 |
| Party Like A Rock Star - Shop Boys | True 7984 | Can I Tell You Nothing - Karye West | True 7981 |
| Make Me Better - Fabolous | True 7985 | Go You Mine - Yo | True 7981 |
| White Girl - USA | True 7986 | Sexy Lady - Jung Berg | True 7981 |
| Umbrella - Rihanna | True 7987 | Buy U A Drank, Showin' Snappin' - T-Pain | True 7981 |
| Clean Like A Cholo - Down AKA Kid | True 7988 | The Way I Are - Timbaland | True 7981 |
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UNLIMITED ENEMIES

- > NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 1 TO 4
- > STYLE: 1 TO 4-PLAYER ACTION/RPG (UP TO 4 PLAYERS IN CO-OP MODE)
- > KICKSTARTER OR NOT?
- > RELEASE: Q4 2011

BORDERLANDS THE FUTURE FRONTIER

IN THE DISTANT FUTURE, SEVEN COLONIZATION SHIPS DEPART FOR THE EDGE OF THE GALAXY. THEIR PASSENGERS SEEK A BETTER LIFE AND THE UNTOLD MINERAL RESOURCES OF THE REMOTE PLANET PANDORA.

After years of travel, the caravan finally reaches its destination. The mix of settlers, prospectors, scientists, and corporate lackeys set about dismantling the ships and converting them into makeshift settlements. It eventually becomes clear that there is little on the desolate planet outside of decrepit alien ruins. Those who have the money leave, and the remaining stranded population devolves into lawlessness. Some seek to get rich by hunting down remnants of alien technology. Most are just trying to survive. After seven Earth years, Pandora's slow orbit finally enters spring and countless horrifying creatures emerge from hibernation. Just when the colony is set to implode on itself, a beacon of hope emerges. One key discovery has the potential to change not just Pandora itself, but the entire galaxy. Welcome to *Borderlands* – a game unlike any other yet still innately familiar.

While working on projects in the *Halo* and *Half-Life* franchises and its own *Brothers in Arms* games, developer Gearbox Software has been kicking around another idea. As huge fans of the *Diablo* series, team members wanted to blend that level of addictive loot grinding and leveling up with the fast-paced action of first-person shooters. Gearbox had proven itself in the FPS realm, but how would it satisfy that insatiable RPG desire for a constant flow of new weapons and items? *Borderlands* utilizes a revolutionary weapons system that features over half a million guns. Combine that with rich frontier lore, violent vehicle combat, and gameplay built for co-op from the beginning, and that *Diablo*-caliber level of addiction doesn't seem so far out of reach.



**MORDECAI**

Mordecai came to Pandora in search of someone from his past. When New Haven leader Helena Pierce informs him that the man, Quinn, died a year ago, Mordecai sets off to uncover how he died and what he was carrying.

More of a lone ranger, this character specializes in sniping enemies from afar. One skill called "Angel on your Shoulder" gives a critical hit boost to allies whenever he headshots an enemy attacking said allies. Mordecai can also simply give a boost to his party's accuracy stats. Partway through the game, he will befriend an alien creature that will assist in combat.

ROLAND

The former soldier of the Crimson Lance is known to loiter around on Pandora as a hired gun. A decade-old vendetta is rekindled when the leader of the brigades is said to have a suspiciously similar name to a man Roland swore to kill.

All three characters have three basic skills with multiple functions that they can cycle through in-game without having to go to a menu screen. Roland's Leadership skill, for example, makes experience gained for everyone in the party while Medical can increase health regeneration. If he switches over to Support, it will do things like increase weapons damage or ammo regeneration.

**LILITH**

Lilith is one of only six Sirens in the galaxy, a group of people with ridiculous powers but no way to control them. Gearbox describes her as a mix between *Firefly's* River and *The Matrix's* Trinity, with some kind of untapped power combined with speedy moves and quick learning skills. Lilith hopes that there is another Siren on Pandora and seeks whomever it is out to hopes that she can discover more about herself.

The image on the left shows her in regular form, while the right design means she's ready to kick ass. She serves essentially as the mage of the group, with powers like increasing the group's rate of fire and creating temporal bubbles that slow down enemies and projectiles or speed up allies. Not much more is known on how she will incorporate magic into *Borderlands*' FPS gameplay style.



those in search of wealth, power, and terrain. The trouble is, the people who were completely wiped out by some kind of force. Only a scattered radio transmission is at the vault's majesty, but not its main characters aren't necessarily content at the outset. And quests will lead them to it.

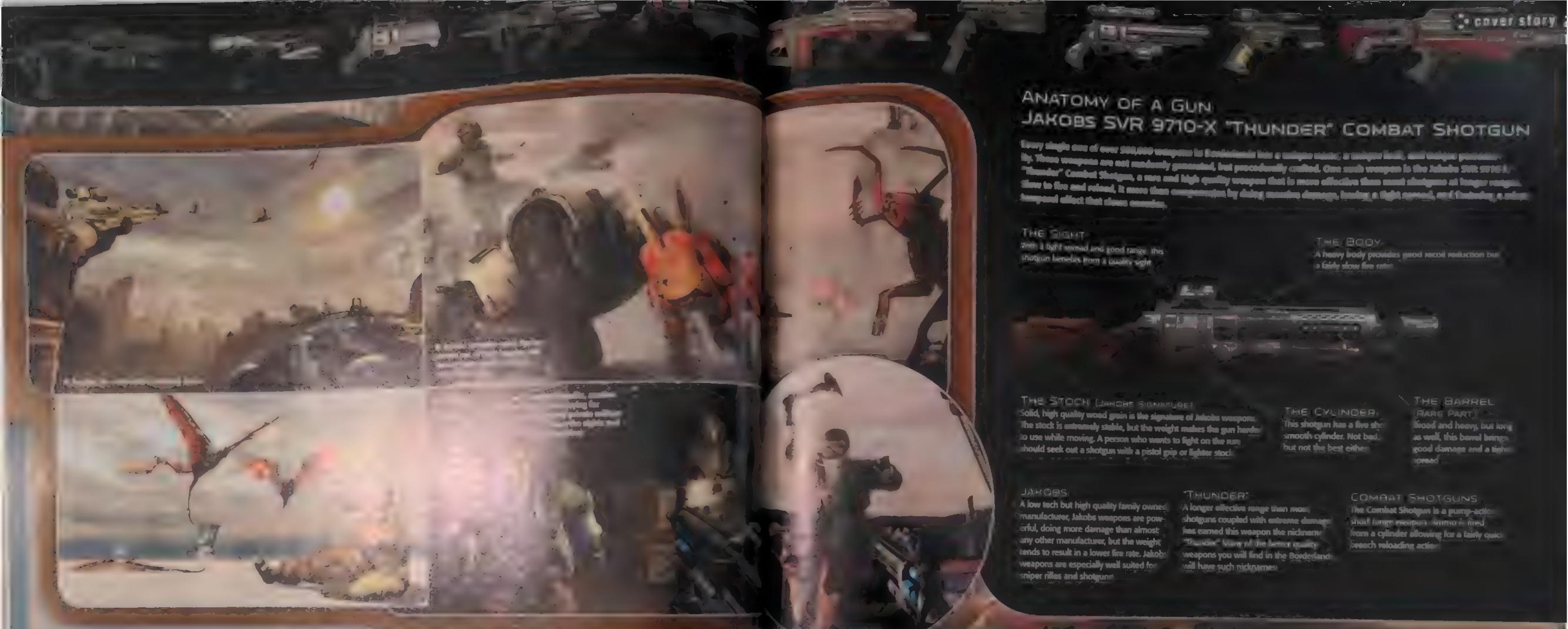
bandits) and indigenous creatures. Unofficial mayor Helena Pierce makes the rules in this dusty settlement that consists mostly of ramshackle metal huts cobbled together from the good ship "Haven." She's been having trouble recently with attacks from a dying species called rats, and tasks Roland to destroy

them with explosive caustic charges that only bandits have. In the distance, you can see Mordecai riding a steed with a tracking device.

While stopping to load up on guns and equipment, the shopkeeper tells if you can activate a transporter (held up by a bandit-invaded military bunker) so that

you get this star out of it. On the way out of town, Helena offers you an extra reward for assassinating a bandit master, which you'll be sniping like crazy. Gearbox is specifically structuring the game so that players will always be in sight, causing a varying length and complexity. "We're encouraging the player to just play five more minutes to get something new," says Hartley. "Sometimes it's just a new gun, sometimes you finish a quest, and sometimes it's another piece of the story that clicks into place." This simultaneously allows players to make meaningful progress over a short period while also encouraging the "just one more" kind of gameplay that can threaten to lead to marathon sessions.

As you head out to the crimson canyons, the game generates a unique instance for the road ahead. While the general path remains consistent, things like barriers, caves, bunkers, towers, enemies, and resources



ANATOMY OF A GUN

JAKOBS SVR 9710-X "THUNDER" COMBAT SHOTGUN

Every single one of over 200,000 weapons is hand-crafted like a unique work of art, in unique tools, and unique processes. These weapons are not randomly generated, but procedurally crafted. One such weapon is the Jakobs SVR 9710-X "Thunder" Combat Shotgun, a rare and high quality weapon that is more effective than most shotguns at longer ranges. How to fire and reload, it does more damage by doing massive damage, having a high recoil, and it having a unique impact effect that slows enemies.

THE SIGHT

With a light recoil and good range, this shotgun benefits from a quality sight.

THE BODY

A heavy body provides good recoil reduction but a fairly slow fire rate.

THE STOCK (JAKOBS SIGNATURE)

Solid, high quality wood grain is the signature of Jakobs weapons. The stock is extremely stable, but the weight makes the gun harder to use while moving. A person who wants to fight on the run should seek out a shotgun with a pistol grip or lighter stock.

THE CYLINDER

This shotgun has a five shot smooth cylinder. Not bad, but not the best either.

THE BARREL (RARE PART)

Broad and heavy, but long as well, this barrel brings good damage and a tight spread.

COMBAT SHOTGUNS

The Combat Shotgun is a pump-action shotgun weapon. Ammunition is fired from a cylinder allowing for a fairly quick reload/reloading action.

BOOMZ AT 3D

The PC version has eight rifle barrels, eight shotguns, and four sniper rifles. You could have up to 16 different weapons to be all different. Take every shooter in the world, all of the weapons, add them all together and you get a magnitude more of barrels, guns, knives, and clips are mixed and matched.

"Weapons? There's no balance," says Armstrong. "It's procedural as opposed to random. Weapons are being built so my gun will have a unique name that's a mix of sounds, including

health, and rain down fiery death from above."

Of course, players can choose to take all of the loot for themselves or they can share with up to three friends in full on and offline co-op. Basically, one player will start up a game and the remaining players will visit that world with their persistent characters. All loot and

says, "Except if I talk to Simon and say I'm playing this new game and it's great, and he says

The fact is, fundamentally, we want a fun game and a lot of things we'll bend down for fun."

Even though it's possible to have four Lilliths running around in a party, it may not be the most effective way to play. All three characters have unique focus skills that are meant to compliment each other. Armstrong points out that you could have a bunch of Roland with health regeneration skills maxed, but you're going to wish someone had ammo generating skills once you run out of bullets. Even if there are some repeated characters in your party, however, everyone will be wearing different armor and helmets anyway, so it's not like you'll have to worry much about the clone trooper effect.

WE CAN TAKE EVERY SHOOTER IN THIS ENTIRE GENERATION - THE XBOX 360, ALL OF THE WEAPONS THAT EVERY ONE ELSE HAS, ADD THEM ALL TOGETHER AND THIS IS THREE TIMES - TWO ORDERS OF MAGNITUDE MORE.

- RANDY ARMSTRONG

ing will be reflected when the visiting characters

mode? "Early on we had a very strong discussion [on whether] we should limit this to three character co-op and say you pick one of these characters," Armstrong



THE AI ACTUALLY UNDERSTANDS THE TERRAIN THAT ITS DRIVING ON AS WELL AS WHAT TYPE OF THINGS EQUAL COOL

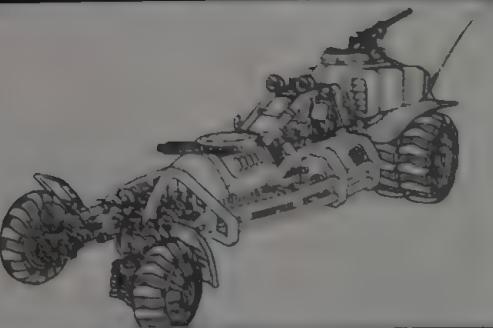
On, players will mostly have to rely on stealing
indit buggies, but eventually they will receive higher
nd models worth hanging on to. They can select the
ent job or wheel type and, once again, choose from

Not rocket launchers take some practice to hit
speeding rivals with. If you do connect, however, shards
of metal and ragdoll bodies go flying in a blast of smoke
and fire. Perhaps the most impressive display is the
rant tires that will continue to bounce and roll until
they hit a surface or another vehicle.

Once the robbing bandits have been dealt with, Iland and Mordécal proceed towards the hive. Several

INTELLIGENT DESIGN

Gearbox has enlisted famous concept artist **Ivan Cook** to work with the company's internal art team to craft some of *Borderlands*' futuristic vehicles. A small sampling of Cook's resume includes designs for alien life in the *Star Wars* universe, the *Nestromo* ship in *Aliens*, the Nazi flying wing in *Kings of the Luftwaffe*, and production design on *Gladiator* and *Borderlands*. The vehicle shown here is called a Salt Shaker, as it moves quickly by accelerating its own gravity. It's a futuristic vehicle in *Borderlands*, and it's also a real-life vehicle.





It's like fly in and out of the hive's lair in a suitably disgusting manner.

zoom in and out through gaping holes on its back. You gaze at one for a brief moment before the thing has taken to zooming. It tries to hit you, but it's throwing your arm—a multi-nail missile—swimming out.

Mordoc hits the gas as you unclasp him to take the cover of screeching null that's quickly approaching. The flying bats are on you and attempt to imp your buggy. Once the skies are mostly clear, Mordoc goes towards the hive. It runs so fast it stings you ridiculous, but he swerves to safety at the last second. You take aim at the hive's eyes on one side and they explode into a goopy mess. It does against another alien, but this time a particularly meaty bull rush lands the kick. It sweeps in and smashes into the side of your buggy, sending a caravanning through the plains.

You land among some rocks, but Mordoc's left exposed without cover. You run out to blast away the bull rush and do a 180° caravanning back to shelter. After patching things, you toss a MRV grenade that fragments and creates a cluster of explosive dots. This distraction gives you just enough time to build up to higher ground. You pick off attacking crits while Mordoc charges out like the bird's remaining eggs. Another ride and another cycle ensues. Mordoc whips out a couple of pistols to stave off the angry aliens and you ready your rocket launcher to take the live down once and for all.

We won't spoil the rest of the boss fight, but we can say that it ends with ever-increasing insanity. Just imagine blasting with fire alongside three blimps and a couple of vehicles. Everyone can take on different roles in the battle according to the way they've customized their character up to that point.

Every item, all of the gear you get, all of your stats, and all of your weapons add up to providing an experience that we hope, if you're smart about it, is going to support your style," Pitchford says. "We want the styles to be really diverse. We want everybody to play the game the way they want to play."

Pitchford wants to walk through a crowd of enemies like the Terminator, with bullets pingin' off his chestplate while he casually blows gobs away. Armstrong prefers to follow everyone from a mile away and stalk through a body-littered meadow.

"So you hear Mac (Armstrong) talk about the guy he wants to be and the guy I want to be and how different those guys are," Pitchford says. "If we were making *Donon Quixote* or *Hellgate* or a game where you're the character, and your identity is based by your capabilities and your weapons and the world's very confined by that, we'd have to agree about that and one of us would win or we'd compromise. But we don't have to be in this genre, because I can be my guy and balance my stats to be the way I want to play, and he can be his guy. We can both exist in this game and that was the goal. However I want to play my PPS, I can do that."

But perhaps the most intriguing element of *Borderlands* is the uncertainty inherent in having half a million guns. After all, Gearbox is mostly working on real world guns right now. Once they throw in alien guns and all of the strange powers that go along with them, all bets are off. "It's going to freak us out," Pitchford says. "We have no idea. There's no possible way we could know all of the weapons and equipment that are capable of being generated. The only people who have what we're doing is our test department."

"Someone's going to find the alien gun that does something ridiculous and amazing," says Armstrong. "My first reaction will be to be 'Oh, well that breaks the game.' My first reaction is going to be 'That is the game!' Looking for that gun is your goal."



KILLZONE 2

WANTING TO FIGHT

THE END OF 2005 WAS A
HEART-SCINTILLATING ONE.
THAT TIMELESS VERSALITE
FLEW BACK FROM EARLIER THIS
JULY. FOR HOPE, THIS YEAR
ABOUT PLENTY SURPRISED.
ONES THAT HAD BEEN SEEN
BEFORE WERE THE NEW,
AND ANNOUNCEMENTS WERE
RARE. EVEN IF THE PROSPECTS
FOR THE COMING MONTHS OF
NEXT GENERATION GAMING
ARE STAGGERingly EXCITING,
NOT SINCE 2005, WHEN
KILLZONE 2 HAD BEEN

ANNOUNCED, HAS THERE
ALMOST BEEN NO NEWS.
THAT'S WHERE KILLZONE 2
TRAILS. THE TWO SEAMLESSLY
IMPOSSIBLE GAME TRAILERS
THAT ACCOMPANIED THEM WERE
HARD TO BELIEVE. FROM THE
INERTIA IT CREATED, IT WAS
IMPOSSIBLY ONE OF THE
AS THE TALK OF THE TOWN — A
TRAILER THAT HAD TO BE SEEN
TO BE BELIEVED. KILLZONE 2
SOONER OR LATER WAS THE
INTENSE, ANTHROPOLOGICALLY

DEFINING THAT IT COULDN'T
BURNISH THE HEAL. AMID THE
EXCITEMENT AND HYPE, THE
GAME MAKERS REMAINED
DEAFLY SILENT. TWO YEARS
LATER, THE GAME IS UP AND
RUNNING IN REAL TIME, AND
FULLY PLAYABLE. THE PROMISE
OF THAT ORIGINAL FILM
MAY HAVE SEEMED A LITTLE
FISHERMANUS AT THE TIME,
BUT HAS THE PROMISE BEEN
FULFILLED BY THE REAL THING?
IN A WORD: YES — AND MAYBE
THERE SOME.

PLAYSTATION 3
► STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION (MULTIPLAYER TBA)
► PUBLISHER SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT
► DEVELOPER GUERRILLA GAMES
► RELEASE 2006



"Take enough fire, and the world will begin to fade to black and white. Those hell sites, and you'd best find cover."



chaos. On the ground, a firefight is already raging, and the real gameplay begins as the squad pushes its way towards

Heigan. In Killzone 2, the tables have turned, and you are part of an elite special forces squad called Legion at the vanguard of an assault on Heigan and its people. Along for the ride is your new liaison, a man named Rico, which should

the attacking ISA forces. This massive weapon is the team's

you to peek out just far enough to paint your target. Lean out too far and the aggressive Helghast won't waste time in

What that is doing is, we've got a lot of mo-cap animations in, and for every hit where you hit them they'll display a different animation," senior producer Steven Ter Heide tells us.

spreading with varying force and

The team revealed another addition to the Killzone formula: bosses. While hurrying to the source of the lightning gun, Sev and his team encounter the Heavy, a shortened name for the heavy trooper of the Helghast army. This massive armored commando wields a minigun until you dive behind cover, at which point his favorite strategy changes to popping an explosive from his grenade launcher. When the beeping grenade lands nearby, Sev's cover is about to be annihilated, and so is he unless he runs for a new hiding place. Using the game's hit-response system, a well-simed shot at the Heavy's head can potentially send him reeling back and to the side, revealing the exposed gas tank on his back. You know the rest of that story.

The same engine running Killzone 2 was created by the team specifically for this game. Its deferred rendering lighting allows for dramatic shadows and effects as light sources move around within the world. And notice later in the demo, destructible cover is also no problem for the game's technology. At a bridge crossing between two buildings, Sev opens fire on a fully burned window, shattering its shutters and opening a new line of sight to the Helghast across the street. Simultaneously, those same soldiers start to fire back, rapidly eroding the walls holding back their fire, leaving Sev and his team exposed. In scenes like these, small graphical flourishes abound. Below the dim overhead light of the deserted building, moth wings flutter wildly in the space between the two buildings; long metal tables shake in the wind and swing wildly from stray bullets. Lightning strikes a nearby structure, and electricity courses down its metal parts to the ground below. Strong tech built over the course of more than two years enables a world that is amazingly detailed and smoothly animated at 10 frames per second. As the team tells us, one character in Killzone 2 has as many polygons as an entire level of the first Killzone. "As far as the ambition for the original Killzone for PlayStation 2, we set the bar very high. We wanted to push the technology. The game was good, but there were certainly some things that could be improved upon," admits Guerrilla Games





Killzone 2: Game Review

SCEA director Herman Hulst: "And now there's a new platform with new possibilities. And we thought: how do we make the Killzone world come alive on this next-generation platform?"

We got the chance to feel just how alive that world already is when we played through this lengthy mission for ourselves. Controls feel remarkably smooth, a happy surprise given how poorly FPS has traditionally fared on Sony hardware. Instead, the traditional look feature on the right analog doesn't feel as jerky as in some first-person offerings. Consequently, aiming is straightforward and allows for targeted shots on enemy body parts, such as one bullet exchange where we fired a single round to knock off an enemy helmet, only to follow through with a lucky headshot. Most noticeable in the fights was the aggressive enemy AI,

which was quick to take advantage of our failings. If we let up on the covering fire, they would quickly flank into a better position. And, as we learned, running out of ammunition during a crucial firefight was tantamount to suicide, as the enemies seemed to notice and charged our location. As the mission came to a head, we found ourselves desperately firing away at some vulnerable parts on the lightning gun, while swarms of Hostiles continually attacked from behind. If our experience is any indication, Killzone 2 won't be short on challenge when it releases next year.

The same team that's designing the single-player campaign is hard at work on a multiplayer component, but the team was reticent to reveal details so early on in the process. When we asked about cooperative gameplay, they held their ground and remained silent, but their smiles as they refused to answer were

just short of a confirmation.

It's hard to declare Killzone 2 an innovative success on a gameplay level, even though all the elements of a solid FPS are firmly in place. Instead, the triumph on display is a technical marvel, with amazingly detailed characters and gritty backgrounds that are easy to pause and marvel at. To our eyes, this early version of the game does justice to a promise that many in the industry thought was an impossible standard only two years ago. It's a testament to how fast the gaming world rolls forward. In the next few months, several other games are likely to set a new high bar for gamers' expectations, and only the release of their sequel will reveal if it's up to the challenge. One way or the other, even our brief hours with the game were enough to conclude that PS3 owners have at least one very triple-A title to call their own next year.

PREVIEWS

A Glimpse Into The Future Of Gaming

PLAYSTATION 3 & XBOX 360

Grand Theft Auto IV

> STYLE: PLAYER ACTION MULTIPLAYER (R) > PUBLISHER: ROCKSTAR GAMES

COLUMBIA TRISTAR ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

After much anticipation, Rockstar Games has finally released its latest entry in the Grand Theft Auto series. The game is set in Liberty City, which is based on New York City. The game features a variety of missions, including heists, races, and exploration.

The game is set in a world where players can do whatever they want, from robbing banks to driving cars. The game is set in a world where players can do whatever they want, from robbing banks to driving cars.

The game is set in a world where players can do whatever they want, from robbing banks to driving cars. The game is set in a world where players can do whatever they want, from robbing banks to driving cars.

analog stick is used for camera movement, for which there are dozens of views.

After a nice ride through Liberty City, Niko stopped at a gas station to fill up his car. He was approached by a man who asked him if he wanted to work for him. Niko agreed, and the two began to plan their next move. They decided to rob a bank, and Niko was given a gun and a car to use.

What followed was a series of phone calls

and text messages, all of which were about the mission to take over the city.

After a quick shot, Goldberg flipped backward out of his chair and through a window, falling several stories to his death. This, of course, brought about a police firefright and chase. While still making use of a wanted star system (up to six stars), the police now have a search radius, which is represented on the map with a glowing ring – the more severe the crime, the larger the ring. It's up to the player to figure out how to get out of this zone. Do you drive vehicles? Hide? Try and outrun them? It's

IV. Unlike previous games in the series, this one now has a working calendar, which is broken down into actual days of the week. After Niko's application was reviewed, he received a telephone call from the firm, who in turn, set up an appointment with him for Thursday at noon.

In preparation for this event, Niko purchased a chocolate brown suit from a top-tier clothing store called Perseus. The clothing changes in this GTA won't be fantastical, and are used in realistic ways. At the law firm, Niko was escorted to Goldberg's office. After taking a seat, the interview began. As Goldberg chatted it up, Niko stood up and pulled a gun on him. This

action was met with a hilarious response from Goldberg's part. He said that the firm supported the second amendment and that "Guns don't kill people. Video games do."

With one quick shot, Goldberg flipped backward out of his chair and through a window, falling several stories to his death. This, of course, brought about a police firefright and chase. While still making use of a wanted star system (up to six stars), the police now have a search radius, which is represented on the map with a glowing ring – the more severe the crime, the larger the ring. It's up to the player to figure out how to get out of this zone. Do you drive vehicles? Hide? Try and outrun them? It's

now time for a game of "I told you so." Rockstar wouldn't go into the details regarding new features, but they did show some hints on their website.

On the website, they say, "We're working on the internal systems (the engine) and extending it. When the odds leaned in the favor of the police, Niko switched to another to show that new, more blind firing options.

The game ended with Niko going down in a hail of fire, but an awesome run, and it makes me want more answers. Who knows, would there be a multiplayer option in the phone during the single-player game? Does this imply co-op? ■■■



The cell phone is to arrange meetings with arm sellers, dealers, and people that have missions for you. To complete



City walkers seem to have a life of their own and will be fun to watch to



Objects in mirror are always smaller than they appear, except for guns. They always look huge.



Both helicopters and boats can be controlled by the player.

previews

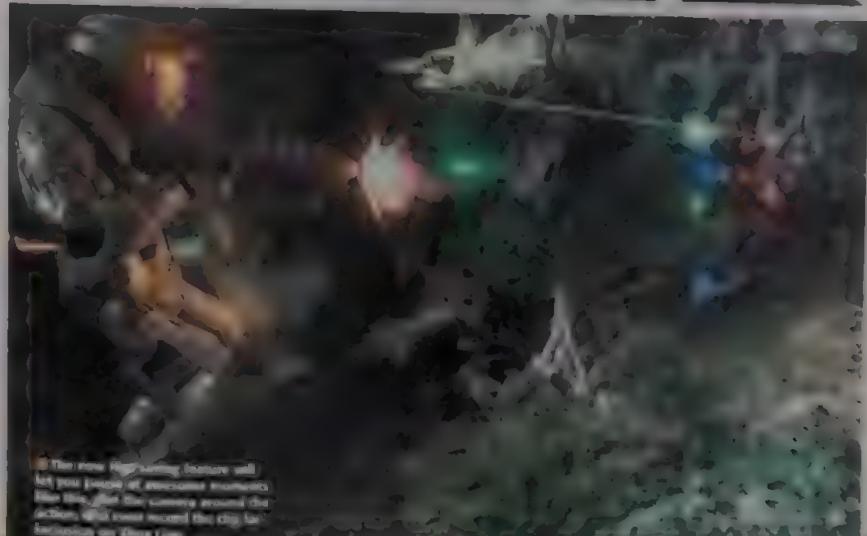
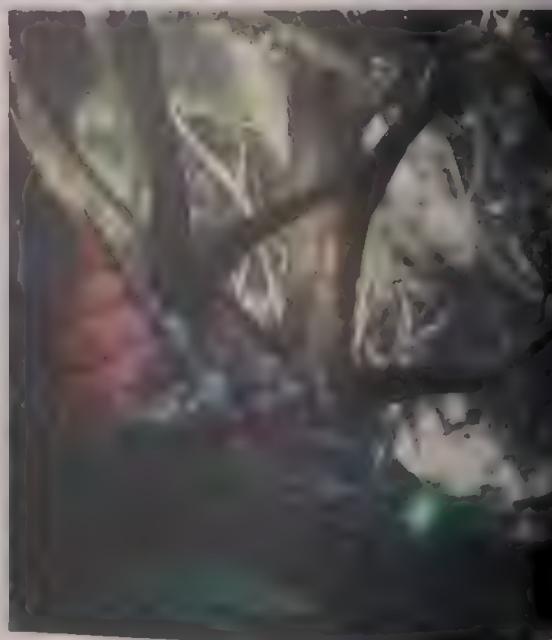
The Master Chief and the Author fight side by side in the new game.

Halo 3

ISHEH MAIS NOUVEAU > DEVELOPER

MULTIPLAYER

U



REVIEWS



Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns

BY JEFF GORE PUBLISHED BY KONAMI DEVELOPED BY KONAMI

Infantry: Load of the Bag

F

ANNIVERSARY GIFTS





Warhammer: Battle March

> PUBLISHER LUMI > GENRE TACTICAL

> DEVELOPER BLACK HOLE

JOINING THE CONSOLE MIGRATION

Black Hole's team describes as "faster and slicker" than the original function as mercenaries. War March features the British Orcs and goblins in their own army. Players can add three new units: a new singer, a dwarf, and a Robin that will join the British in the PC game. The new campaign has many interesting maps that never before seen in any Warhammer game. It also offers a variety of racing tracks that are different from the other Empire and Chaos racing games.

For the High Elf army, Black Hole has added the Iron Elves to the round with the new Dark Elves. Through them, players can join their own Iron Elf army. Black Hole assures us that the Dark Elf army, which they now know, is the favorite among players. They have also added more options for cars. Mag speed and rear gear are available depending on how players want to play. Two-dimensional Multiplayer mode will feature 1 vs 1, 3 vs 3, customizable tracks, and a dual feature standard. The single-player campaign offers players up to 100 missions. Developers are currently working on the new multiplayer mode, which will be online only.

Black Hole is listening to some of the feedback from the Battle March. We're definitely going to continue to make changes to the game based on what we hear from our players. We're trying to make sure that the game is fun and accessible to everyone.

DON'T JUST RIP UP THE TRACK. TEAR IT A NEW ONE.

Actual in-game screenshot

Sega Rally is finally coming to the PlayStation 2, making it the first racing game to be移植 to the console. The game features a variety of tracks and modes, including a career mode and a battle mode. The graphics are improved, and the controls are more responsive. The game is set to release in October 2004.

SEGA RALLY
COMING OCTOBER 2004

RP
www.sega.com

XBOX 360
GAMES FOR WINDOWS

SRS
www.sega.com

← previous



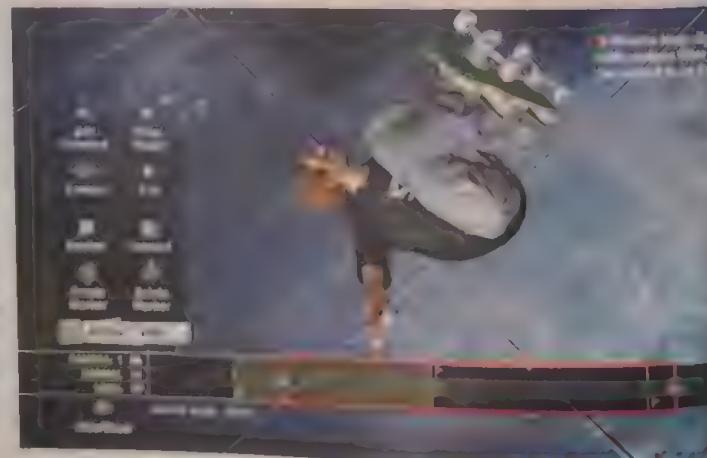
Skate

> STYLE
> PUBLISHER

> DEVELOPER ELECTRONIC ARTS > RELEASE SE

THE NEW SEARCH FOR ANIMAL CHIN

W

A large image of a giant, pale, horned creature with a skull-like face, standing in a dark, smoky environment. Below it, a smaller character looks up at the creature.

do you cast is the shadow they fear.

ARTOON.

Microsoft

MARVEL

TEEN

ESRB CONTENT RATING

www.esrb.org

Adult Reference
Crude Humor
Fantasy Violence
Mid Language
Mid-Suggestive Themes

BLUE DRAGON

A true Japanese-style RPG, forged from the collective vision of Hironobu Sakaguchi, Akira Toriyama, and Nobuo Uematsu

exclusively for Xbox 360

xbox.com/bluedragon

Uncharted: Drake's Fortune

> STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION ADVENTURE > PUBLISHER SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT > DEVELOPER NAUGHTY DOG > RELEASE APRIL 2007

BURIED TREASURE

What's the best way to get into the Uncharted series? It's simple: Start at the beginning. Naughty Dog's first-person action-adventure game, *Uncharted: Drake's Fortune*, is the perfect introduction to the franchise. It's got all the hallmarks of the series: a compelling story, a lovable lead character, and a host of fun, challenging levels.

It's also a solid game in its own right. The story follows Nathan Drake as he tracks down his father's last known location. The level design is excellent, with each stage packed with puzzles and enemies. The combat is fast-paced and rewarding, with plenty of opportunities to showcase your skills.

Some of the great action/adventure epics, and we noticed some tweaks to Drake's female companion, Elena, not the least of which was a switch to blonde hair that had a lot more life to it than before. Meanwhile, the banter between her and Drake remains entertaining and believable. Overall, a feeling of fun and excitement permeates everything we've seen of *Uncharted*. We can't wait to see how the final product comes together later this year. ■■■



PLAYSTATION 3/PS2/PS3

Burnout Paradise

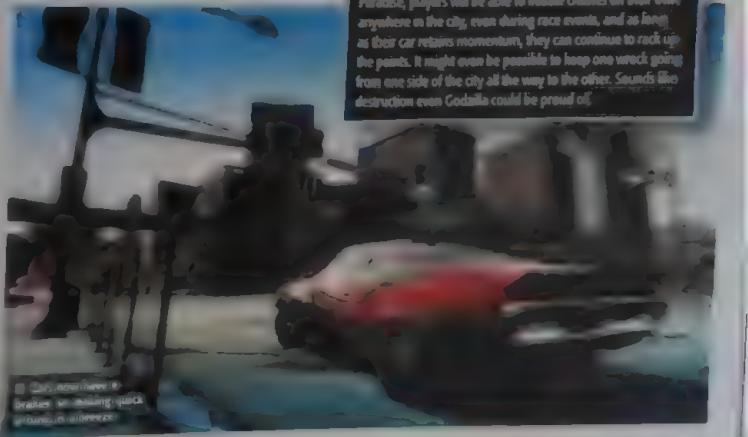
> STYLE 2-PLAYER VIA PLAYSTATION NETWORK AND XBOX LIVE > DEVELOPER CRITERION GAMES > RELEASE APRIL

FREEBURN

The game play in *Burnout Paradise* jumps between platforming and the immediate joys more like racing and action. You can do whatever you want.

watch a high-speed ride crash and burn, leaving a smoldering wasteland once beautiful. And we're not just talking about cars. For some reason there aren't many more fun than causing — or even surviving — high-speed wrecks over the *Burnout* series.

Critics of *Burnout* made from the ground up for next-gen platforms wanted to make a fresh start. They wanted a *Burnout* with all the loading screens and menus. To accomplish this in an open world environment called Paradise City. Races and events like Takedown are still present, but all you will have to do is drive to the starting line.



IT'S SHOWTIME

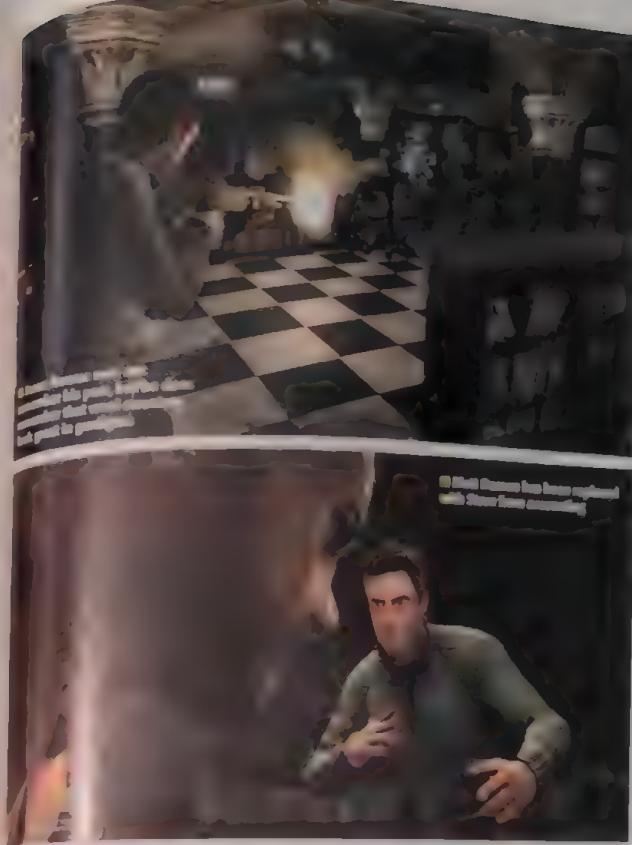
Considering the open world aspect of the game, Criterion found it a challenge to create congested crash junctions all over the city. But since Crash Mode is many players' favorite mode, what was a developer to do? How about turn Crash Mode into a crash anytime mode and call it Showtime. In Showtime, players will be able to initiate crashes on their own anywhere in the city, even during race events, and as long as their car retains momentum, they can continue to rack up the points. It might even be possible to keep one wreck going from one side of the city all the way to the other. Sounds like destruction even Godzilla could be proud of.

your boost meter fills up, head to a paint shop. We took the new city for a spin and after 15 minutes we realized that we hadn't been wing around and exploring the game's open world. Freedom run continue in the online arena. While playing with your friends to join, and your friends with theirs. You can screen or pause. Online friends for takedowns, and if you're successful in making a camera peripheral) the game will take a picture and send it to them. You can also invite them to join earn a payback — giving them the opportunity to lock up your brakes, or some other trick to get a revenge drive. With all these changes, it's clear that this is *Burnout* 2.0. The cars actually feel and handle differently, and their will alter how they react with the environment, resulting in different car every time. We can't wait to see what else we can make, we just wish we didn't have to wait so long.

MX vs. ATV Untamed

> STYLE

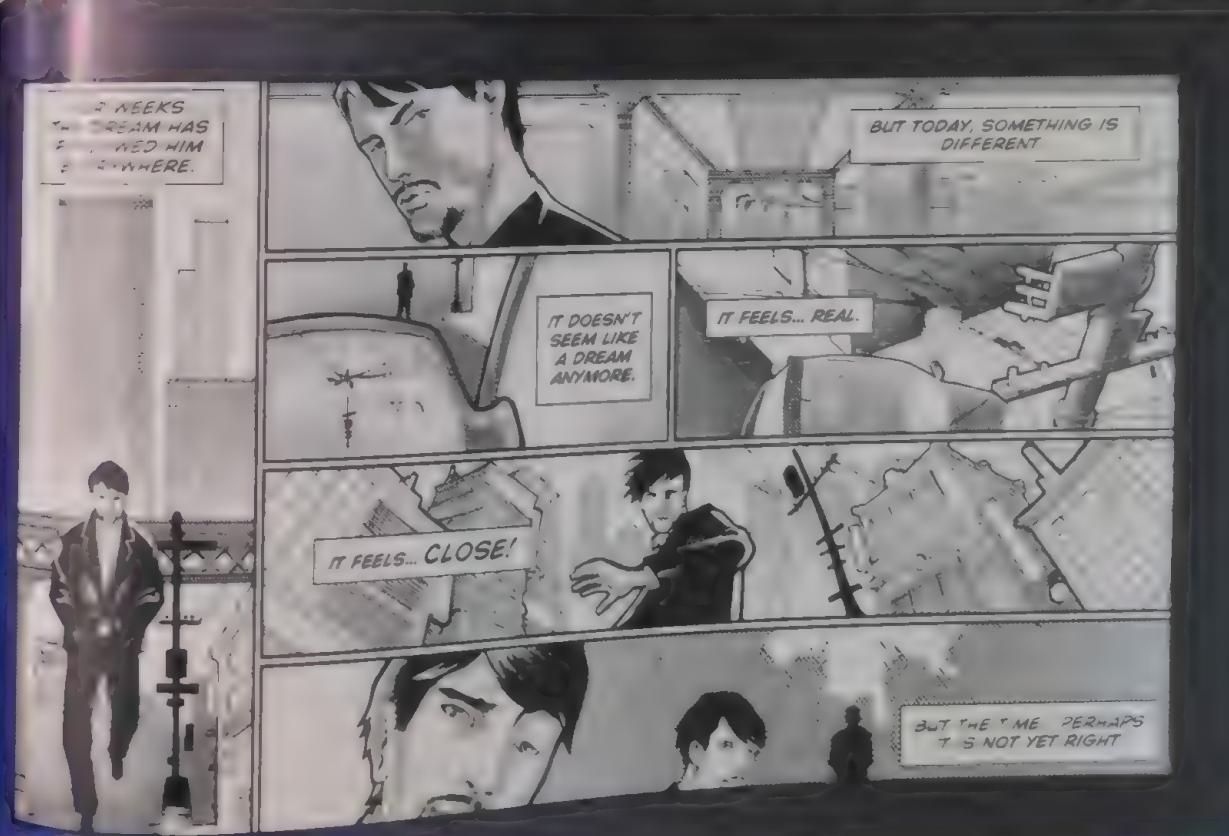
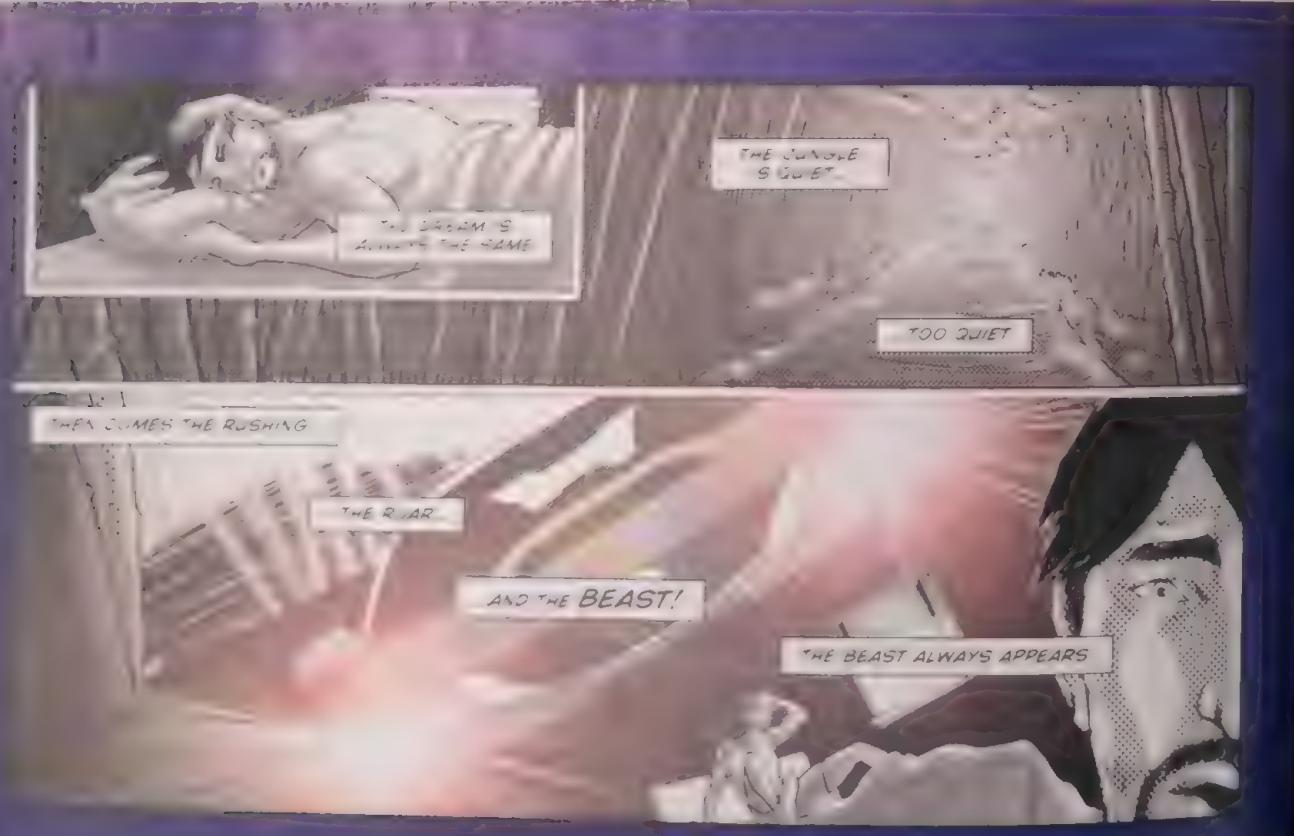
HAULIN' IT

M

The Bourne Conspiracy

> STYLE > PLAYER ACTION > PUBLISHER SIERRA > DEVELOPER HIGH MOON STUDIOS > RELEASE 5.1.2001

STILL-BOURNE OR RE-BOURNE?

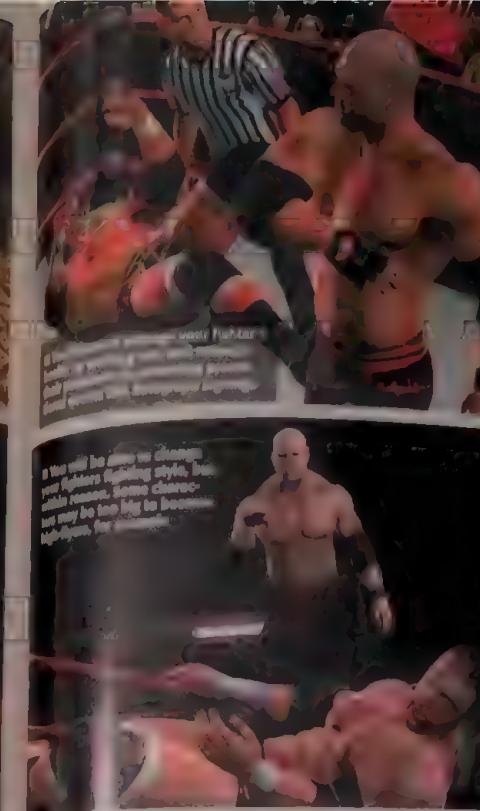
T

Fable 2

> **STYLE** 1-PLAYER ACTION/RPG (MULTIPLAYER TBO) > **PUBLISHER** MICROSOFT GAME STUDIOS > **DEVELOPER** LUMBERJACK GAMES
> **RELEASE** Q4 2023

THE SOUND OF WAR

Defining the right mix of incentives is key to getting the best from your employees. Incentives can be used to reward performance, encourage innovation, and drive efficiency. However, it's important to ensure that incentives are aligned with company goals and don't create negative side effects. This article will explore the different types of incentives available and provide tips for creating effective incentive programs.



PlayStation®

WWE Smackdown! vs. Raw 2008

**STUDIO GIGANTESCA
PUBLISHER & DEVELOPER**

NOT A SLAP FIGHT

W. GEAR FIGHT

1



Also new to this year's entry is 24// Mode, which
is designed to become a legend. There is no
journey, such as winning the
"Hannemann" winning titles, or getting
over 25. Because it is
depending on if you are pl-
h superhero or an unknown.

confidence, etc., and like in past CMC blocks
we'll have participants to have us tell their
tale. Crowds will be more interactive this time
and they will offer you
a reward to help hold down your
energy smoother animation
and audio stick moves this sounds like it might

1000 1000 1000 1000 1000 1000 1000 1000 1000 1000

WE ARE FINALLY GETTING HIGH HIR...

WELL, IT MATTER HOW YOU LIVE ON THE CAT'S TONGUE

YASU. DO YOU BELIEVE IN DESTINY?

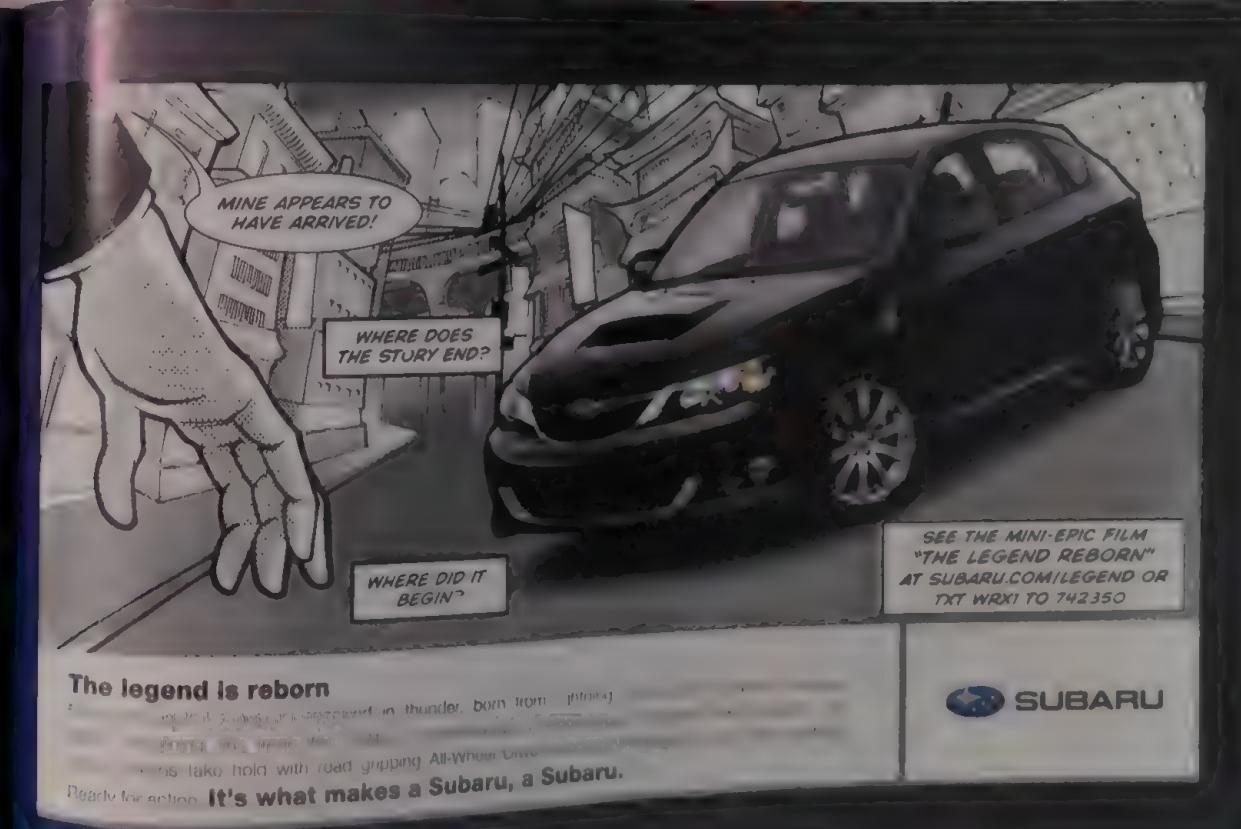
...HE DOESN'T HAVE YOURS!

NO PITCHING!

THE ED

EH, WHO'S GOT TIME FOR THAT STUFF?

TIME? HAH. FUNNY YOU SHOULD MENTION TIME...





Super Sm

• **STYLE** **141** ■

TURN THIS PAGE

T

... i.e., now has less of an emphasis

into the battle for a short time. These assist characters are up with. It could be a Hammer Bro. Captain Falcon's must

STRIP TEASE



Super Mario Galaxy

- **STYLE** 1 OR 2-PLAYER ACTION/PLATFORM > **PUBLISHER** NINTENDO > **DEVELOPER** NINTENDO
RELEASE NOVEMBER 12

SPACE JUMP

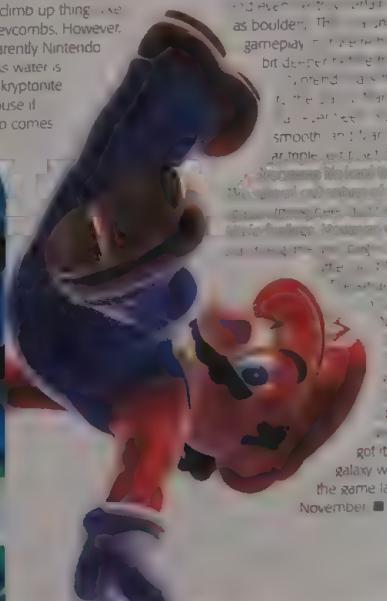
When some strange creature kidnaps Princess Peach and escapes into outer space, Mario's Bowser-sense starts tingling and he heads into the skies to rescue her. After all, it's a Mario game.

Mario has never been afraid to put on an animal costumes, and it looks like nothing has changed with Galaxy. On one level Mario

centers on a gravity well that pulls in space debns, thereby creating new ground for Mano to walk on. It's like a level that builds itself while you play.

Mario has never been afraid to put on an animal costume, and it looks like nothing has changed with Galaxy. On one level Mario

A close-up photograph of a colorful, textured surface, possibly a piece of art or a decorative object, featuring a large orange circle and various organic shapes.



see [PEWRS](#)

As of 1996, *Worms* is still the best game ever made for the Amiga. It's a complete game, it's funny, it's unpredictable, it's challenging, it's fun, and it's something that you can play again and again. It's a game that's still relevant today, and it's a game that's still fun to play.

bit derzeit eine zarte
Kontakt- und Theorie-
forschung. Sie ist die
einzige, die sich mit
der Praxis beschäftigt.

simple, and I like it. By the way, we have been able to determine the chemical composition of the basic materials in the following ways: (1) by direct analysis; (2) by inference from the results of experiments on the properties of the materials; (3) by inference from the results of experiments on the properties of the materials.

A close-up view of a red, textured object, possibly a toy or a piece of fruit, partially obscuring a page from a children's book. The book page shows some text and a small illustration.

got it, and the whole
galaxy will know it when
the game launches this
November ■ ■ ■



The Simpsons Game

> **STYLE** 1 OR 2-LAYER ACTION > **PUBLISHER**
> **RELEASE**

S-M-B-T

What is the best way to
keep your car
in top condition?
The answer is simple:
regular maintenance.
It's important to have
your car checked by a
qualified mechanic at least
once a year. This will help
you avoid costly repairs
and keep your car running
smoothly. It's also a good
idea to have your car
serviced regularly, even if
you don't notice any
problems. This will help
you catch any potential
problems early on and
fix them before they
become major issues.



The self-referential streak that has distinguished The Simpsons in its 18 years on television will run through the game as well. The dev team has clearly done its research, drawing upon material that seasoned veterans might even find obscure. Some characters that were relegated to single Halloween episodes (like the bloodthirsty dolphins) make prominent appearances, and you can expect to see nods to the Fighting Hellfish, faulty Krusty-branded merchandise, and gummi Venus de Milo. Matt Groening, the series creator, will even appear as a boss. We're still keeping our fingers crossed for a Lee Carvallo's Putting Challenge minigame!

"OH, I'VE WASTED MY LIFE"



since each stage has two participating family members (you just switch between them if you're playing by yourself).

There needs to be some kind of
balance between men and that's
what comes in Returning to
the 90's The Simpsons Game
and Springfield in a van
of course building up bad guys and
the whole thing is a coop
game I think it would be
fun to take these challenges together.

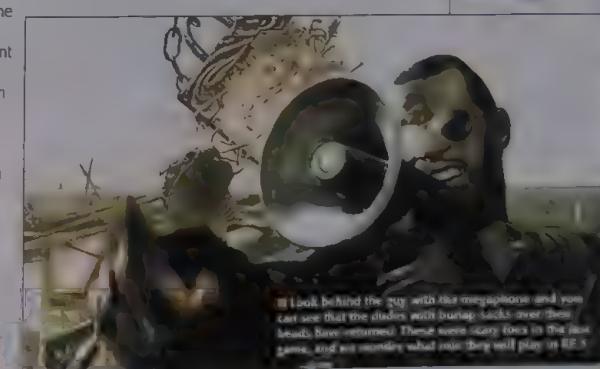


Your number has been called. You're leaving your way through a darkened alley, on the from someone – something – terrible. Infected humans. Not zombies, not Los Ganados, not like monsters you've faced before. An enemy too big to fight, you run out into the light, and your car adjust to an over-saturated world. The heat is everything that is scanner in the dark. Out of fear and stress begin to sweat. If you stay out here too long you'll physically tire; aiming will become difficult and you'll grow tired. This place is driving you mad. You're not the only one. Welcome to Resident Evil.

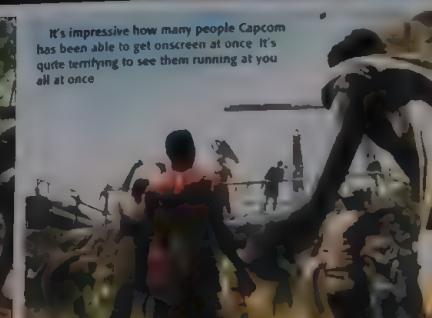
Production notes: Jun Takeuchi has stated that the movie *Black Hawk Down* served as inspiration for the one look at the dilapidated city and the sprawling militant base.

... and the onrushing militia
wants to watching that inspiration
reactor. The world of RE 5 is alive with
violence. Lagers rush a decrepit bus
where a few have taken refuge. The
reactor is freed out of their eyes and
now An one large enemy takes out a
single, supporting strut with a single

The environments are gorgeously hawt. An unsettling chant echoes in the distance as main character Chris Redfield stands alone in the dark. The breeze whips through his hair as others set up.



It's impressive how many people Capcom has been able to get onscreen at once. It's quite terrifying to see them running at you all at once.



...and the last round of the game, he was in the center and he had 14, and he was able to get out of the air with a maneuver that is... This is a little... I think it's the best maneuver in the game, and the best impressive close combat maneuvers. We had a flurry of quick axe slashes then attacker in the chest, vault from the top overturning bus, and fight off a few aggies and then... [Music playing] Chins shoves in there and it's really cool.

to handle. Unfortunately, RE 5 definitely won't be the last in the series. Director John Carl Bressie left fans with several questions. How will that machete inconspicuously placed on Chris's back be used? Who will Chris be talking to on the other end of that hands-free headset attached to his ear? Who is the mysterious woman who appears at the very end of RE 5's new extended trailer? Check back later for the answers, because we are just as eager as anyone to learn them. ■ ■ ■

Resident Evil 5

TYPE: 1-PLAYER ACTION/ADVENTURE • PUBLISHER: CARDBOARD GAMES • DEVELOPER: CARDBOARD GAMES • RELEASE: 2009

FEATURING

Colorado mountain town or some farming village, this is the desert. Takeuchi has also talked about how body temperature will play an important role in the game. Exposure to extreme heat will affect how this performs, and may even cause hallucinations. RE 5's setting, and its extreme contrasts between light and dark, are meant to evoke a sense that the world has gone crazy.

RE 5's gameplay looks like a dear evolution of RE 4's, and you can't blame Capcom for not mixing it up too much when that

*These guys are so aggressive
they won't even let your spirit go
beyond the fence.*

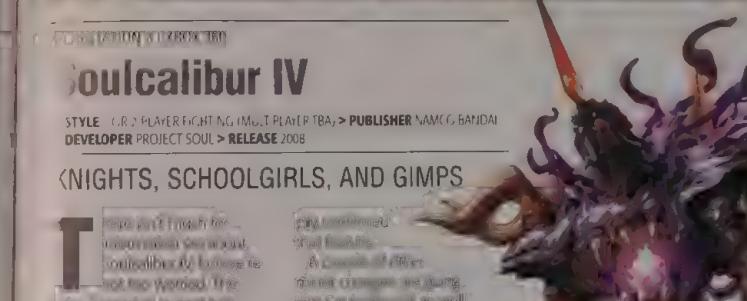
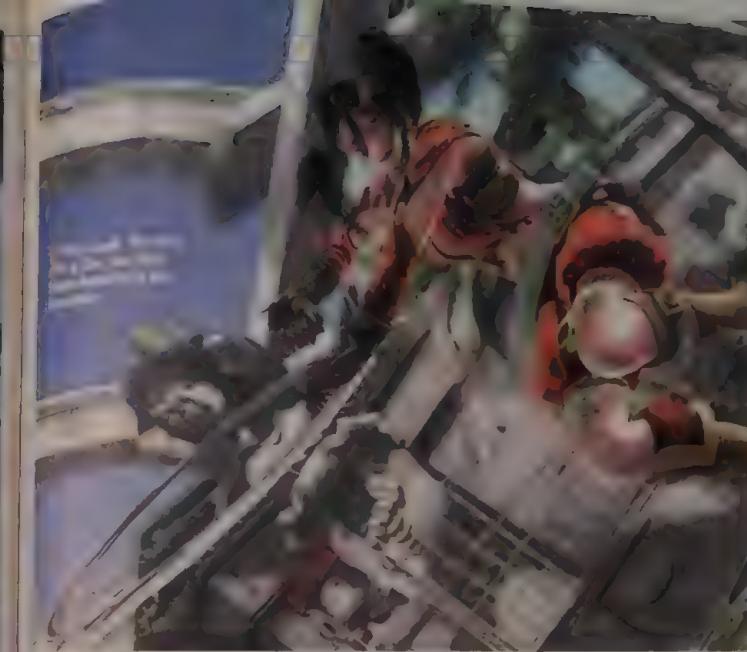




osely know the norms of the RTS genre – resource management, unit creation, and base layout were all very familiar – there are some elements that impressed. The presentation is outstanding, with a score of original musical tracks lending ambience to the fantastical visuals. Vehicle physics are modeled to the point of Warthogs displaying their iconic fishtail maneuvers. Perhaps most importantly,

the battles we saw played out just as you'd expect them to based on the Halo FPSs – the Covenant deployed infantry squads of Grunts led by an Elite, and both sides supported their troops with a variety of vehicles in appropriate roles.

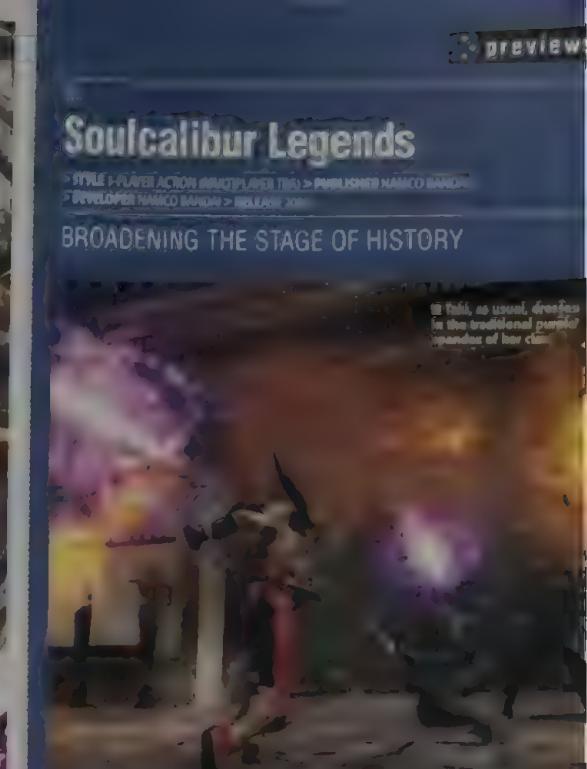
Ensemble purportedly spent six months doing nothing but perfecting the controls (which look very similar to EA's Battle for Middle-earth and Command & Conquer 3 ports on Xbox 360), so Halo Wars should play well. Really, who's going to argue if the gameplay turns out to be said to be spectacular, as long we get a visually amazing RTS that tells more of the Halo story? ■ ■ ■



The last Soulcalibur game was a bit of a letdown, but it's not too worried. The company is going to do better on consoles with a furious storm of particle effects and smoothly lit, high-polygon character models – what more do you really need to know? It's still one-on-one fighting, the weapons share the spotlight with the fighters as always, and the cast of characters is beyond diverse. The one thing we truly wanted – outside of the obvious, like new fighters and moves and a few balance tweaks, all of which are present – is online, and Namco Bandai has

some bigger changes in store but since the release date is still a ways off, Namco Bandai has plenty of time to release more specific information.

With online definitely in the game, though, we already know everything we need to. The franchise's track record is easily enough to get us on board the Soulcalibur IV train. ■ ■ ■



Precedent be damned, Namco Bandai is spinning off this action-oriented adventure from the main Soulcalibur line. Designed exclusively for Wii, Soulcalibur: Legends guest between the original Soul Blade and Soul Calibur timelines. The screens show many long-standing series favorites in action, so the Germans won't be going alone – though Namco Bandai has dodged any questions regarding multiplayer as of yet. Using the Wii remote and its nunchuk attachment to approximate the motions of swinging a weapon, players will grind up regions of Ross and mercenaries



Soulcalibur Legends

STYLE: 4-PLAYER ACTION (MULTIPLAYER TBA) > PUBLISHER: NAMCO BANDAI
> DEVELOPER: NAMCO BANDAI > RELEASE: 2008

BROADENING THE STAGE OF HISTORY

In fact, as usual, dredges in the traditional purist shades of the classic

PHOTOPHILE

Mini Previews With Big Pictures



PLAYSTATION 3 | XBOX 360 Army of Two

At E3 we got an update on EA's Army of Two, a title from new studio EA Montreal. The demo showed another extension of the game's co-op focus, whether you're playing with an AI partner or a real-life friend. Similar to the concept of *aggro* in an online shooter, enemies attack the most threatening party member. There is an aggro meter that is shared between the two. When one is more aggro than the other, the non-aggressive player becomes invisible to enemies, allowing him stealthily. Back-to-back 360 degree shooting with a semi-automatic weapon is also in the game, and yes, tampons that heal wounds are also in the game, and who knows what other surprises will reveal themselves before the title's release at the end of the year.



NINTENDO DS Final Fantasy XII: Revenant Wings

Final Fantasy XII: Revenant Wings is a spin-off of the main Final Fantasy XII game, where the player takes on the role of the character Alrahn. The game features a 3D perspective and includes elements of both RPG and action genres. It is set in the world of Ivalice and follows the story of Alrahn as he tries to find his way back to his home. The game features a variety of weapons and abilities, including magic and physical attacks. The graphics are impressive for its time, with detailed environments and character models. The game is available for the Nintendo DS.

NINTENDO DS Contra 4 (working title)

Contra 4 (working title) is a spin-off of the classic Contra series. The game features a 3D perspective and includes elements of both RPG and action genres. It is set in a futuristic city and follows the story of a group of resistance fighters as they try to stop a powerful alien invasion. The game features a variety of weapons and abilities, including magic and physical attacks. The graphics are impressive for its time, with detailed environments and character models. The game is available for the Nintendo DS.

How and what should Harvey examine?



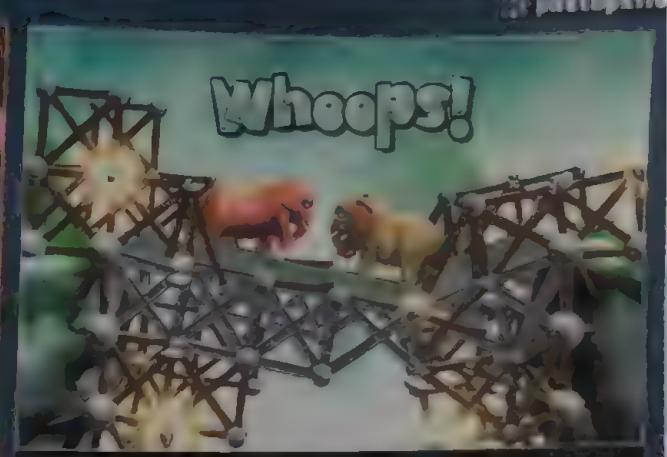
PLAYSTATION 2 | PSP Harvey Birdman: Attorney at Law

When you think legal wrangling couldn't get much more ridiculous than it is in *Harvey Birdman*, Cappuccino ups the ante with a game based on Adult Swim's Harvey Birdman. The show's writers are handling all dialogue and plotting, and many of the show's voice actors have signed on as well. The game will feature five independent cases and looks to emulate the look of the cartoon to a tee. Players will investigate crime scenes, question witnesses, and work the courtroom with a zany cast of characters. Be sure to take the time to catch up on the DVDs before this hits in the fall.



PLAYSTATION 3 Infamous

Sucker Punch earned its chops by creating the excellent Sly Cooper franchise, but now it is leaving their jury-rigged behind for the excitement of Infamous, a next-gen sandbox title that reminds us a bit of Prototype and Crackdown. Information is scarce on this game, but we do know that you take on the role of a budding superhero. Whether you choose to use your powers for good or evil is entirely up to you. Using your powers to collapse buildings on people who look at you funny is infinitely more entertaining than saving cats from trees, but the choice is yours nonetheless. Wimp.



PLAYSTATION 3 Elefunk

U.K. mobile developer 8bit Games is trying its hand at the PlayStation Network. Players will build various structures like bridges and ramps from a mix of metal, wood, and rope. Once complete, elephants will be sent across to see if your bridge will hold strong or tumble into rooftops. Elefunk will include puzzle mode, time trial, and a multiplayer deconstruction mode similar to Jenga, where players take turns removing pieces without making the structure collapse. Sony is tentatively planning a fall 2007 release.



Wii EA Playground

Wouldn't it be fun to play tetherball, dodgeball, or kickball right about now? No, we're not trying to encourage you to go outside. Don't be silly. We're talking about EA's new minigame collection being developed to recapture all the joys and thrills of a childhood's playground. Up to four players will be able to compete in everything from slingshot games to cornhole. If EA really wants to make this the definitive playground simulation than maybe we'll see a digital adaptation of the game we always played after lunch: bloody knuckles.



Metal Gear Solid 4

Folklore

**Mario & Sonic at the Olympic Games**

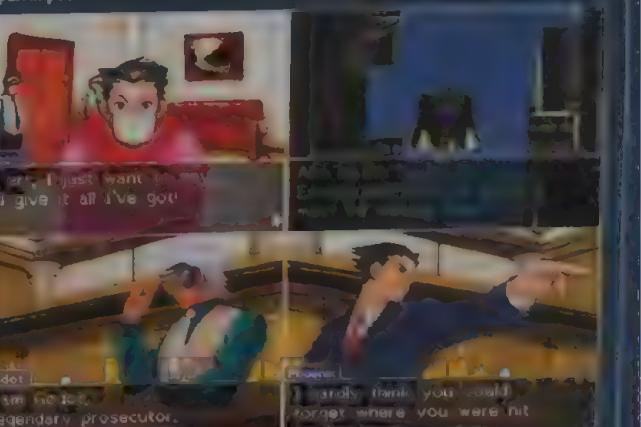
With the 2008 Beijing Olympics just around the corner, it's time to get ready for the actual venues for the games. To cover more than 20 Olympic events and challenges in the triple jump, players will need to jump and then flick them up to jump over the horizon come this November.

**Scene It? Lights, Camera, Action****Silent Hill 5**

Even with as much bad history as Silent Hill, it's amazing that people still stay in the city limits. Of course, if they didn't, gamers wouldn't have an excuse to explore the depths of this psychologically disturbing setting. Konami is bringing its master to the center in the Silent Hill series later next year. This entry follows a veteran soldier looking for his brother, and will be developed by The Collective rather than the original team. Details are still slim, but it will be a nice change of pace to control the player character with some decent weapons training for once.

**PixelJunk Racers**

PixelJunk Racers, a 100% precision racing game from the creators of the PixelJunk Games, the team that brought us Star Fox Commando. In the second game in the series of traditional 2D racing (Pixel Super-Sprint, Commando), you'll be racing (those sporting aliens and metal media popular in the 80s), the graphics look to be very employable (second and fourth tracks generated by the game), and you must maintain at ultra-speeding speeds. Racers will find a great variety of tracks to choose from, including one named "Lunar" which means you'll race in space upon impact.

**Phoenix Wright: Ace Attorney Trials and Tribulations**

After impressing law enforcement and the public with his first trial, Phoenix Wright is back in the courtroom for another round of justice. In North America, some we North Americans are patiently waiting for Capcom to release number three this September. The first case is a flashback to one of Miles' early cases, where he must defend Phoenix in a murder trial. Phoenix will return to the driver's seat for case two, and incorporate all of the same actions from previous games, including the defense team, new prosecution rival, Godot. He's an impeccable record, and some, like ourselves, think Phoenix will be a good fit.

**Viva Piñata: Party Animals**

Rare is taking this Piñata from its animal raising realm to the party game genre, so far, it might stick this time around. Developer Krome Studios (known for titles like Teletubbies and Spyro) is taking the reins from Rare. Incorporating four-player competition, online and off, with over 40 different minigames, you'll have the chance to race in wacky environments, including balloon races across a pond, and be the first to eat a bunch of fruit. This button-mashing fest is set to release at the tail end of 2007.



Wii | PlayStation 3 | PS2
Spider-Man: Friend or Foe



Gears of War

It took a while, but *Gears* is finally making its way to PC. Luckily for Windows gamers, there's a fair amount of new content. There are five new chapters in the game (including an encounter with the colossal Brumak), a map editor, three new multiplayer maps, and a new online game type. The game will require DirectX 10, and seeing it in silky-smooth, super-high resolution is sure to make you want to pony up the five bucks a copy.



PS3 | Xbox 360 | PC
Battlestar Galactica

We were hoping that publisher Sierra would release a *Battlestar Galactica* game that would allow us to jettison Starbuck through an airlock, but being a Cygnus Raider is more than a fair substitute. In this top-down shooter, many of the epic space battles seen in the show are recreated, as well as some new ones. You can also hop online for 6-player dogfights. The arcade game is a bit like *Star Wars: X-Wing*, but the action is quite intense, allowing players to use shields, kick in the thrusters, and spin 180 degrees. A release date has yet to be given, but the game is headed to the PlayStation 3, Xbox 360, and PC this fall.



PC
Supreme Commander: Forged Alliance

The cries of "Fix Supreme Commander's crappy UI!" rang loud from the many corners of the Internet after the game launched to commercial and critical success earlier this year. The developers at Gas Powered Games have taken that demand to heart with this standalone expansion. *Forged Alliance* features a brand-new faction (the Seraphim), 10 new units including a super-powered experimental fighter (the Vaca), and the aforementioned new UI. We can't wait to make some more tools when this comes out in November.



PLAYSTATION 3
Wipeout HD

Racer *Wipeout* has been a staple of the PlayStation catalog since 1999, so it comes as no surprise that the series has its first PS3 offering in the works. This time, it sounds like you'll need an Internet connection to get in on the action, as *Wipeout HD* will be released only on the PlayStation Network. The racing tracks and the smooth tracks over which they float look amazing, and the sense of speed in the trailer from E3 was pretty remarkable. It looks as if most of the courses will be familiar to those who played previous releases, but we'll now be seeing them in high def. No word yet on whether the game will hit the U.S., but rumor has it Europe may be wiping out before the end of the year.



Wii
Rayman Raving Rabbids 2

The Rabbids are back with a hare-brained scheme to take over the world. Luckily for us, this devious plot involves 60 new minigames to enjoy. Since our first look at the game a couple issues back, we've had the chance to check out even more of these bite-sized challenges. Our favorites include Nine-to-Five Rabbid, which tasks you with going to work off in the office as long as you can before the boss pops his head into the room, and Football, which is a cross between the glory days of Tecmo Bowl and the playground football, which is a cross between the glory days of Tecmo Bowl and the playground football, which is a cross between the glory days of Tecmo Bowl and the playground football. The new four-player party mode will allow you to play these games with your friends simultaneously as the Rabbids come back to store shelves on November 15.



PLAYSTATION 3 | XBOX 360 | Wii | PLAYSTATION 2
Cars Mater-National

It would have been easy for the hardcore gaming crowd to dismiss last year's *Cars* video game as just another piece of kid's licensed junk. That would have been a mistake, as the title turned out to be a lot of fun, and well deserving of the huge sales that came in. Surprisingly, almost no one, THQ has decided to follow up with a sequel this year. *Mater-National* will detail the continuing adventures of Lightning and Mater as they host their first big race in Radiator Springs. Rainbow Studios should have kids everywhere racing like crazy before the end of the year, and there's a decent chance more avid gamers may want to check it out for themselves.



PSP
Star Wars Battlefront: Renegade Squadron

It may seem odd that LucasArts has chosen to continue the *Battlefront* series exclusively on PSP at this point, but as long as the company is dedicated to pumping out quality sequels like this one is shaping up to be, we have no complaints. In this iteration, customization is the name of the game. Rather than just picking a trooper class, you now have complete control over what weapons your character brings to the battlefield and also what he or she may look like. As the screenshots above show, heroes are still a part of the mix, in addition to being able to suit up as IG-88 or Admiral Ackbar's trap. Adorable hero vehicles, such as Vader's Tie Advanced and Boba Fett's Slave I, are available for play. *Renegade Squadron* will be released on the same day as a new Star Wars-themed PSP this September.

REVIEWS

We Play The Crap So You Don't Have To



Mario Strikers Charged



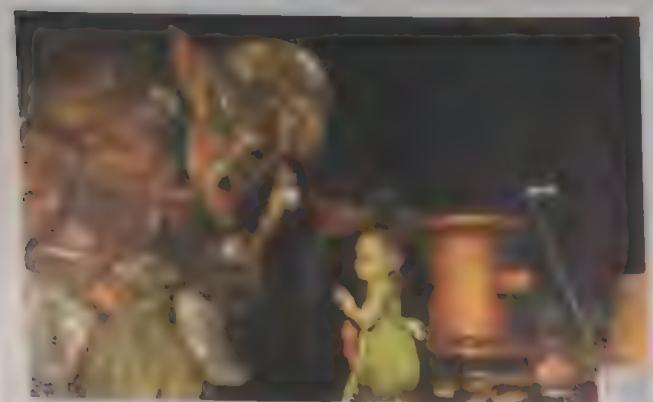
Ridley



100%



Mario Strikers Charged



BioShock



Picross DS

Picross DS marks the return of perhaps the ultimate cult classic to掌上游戏机 history. It is a revention of Mario's Picross, a beloved puzzle released for the original Game Boy in 1995. As cross-based puzzles allow you to create dot-matrix art by filling in a screen grid. It's a bit hard to describe, but trust us, as soon as you boot it up, you'll be hooked. Fans of *Snackeez* and *Brain Age*, here's your new addiction.

► **Concept**: How well does the game cling to the tried-and-true?

► **Graphics**: How good a game looks, taking into account how it plays.

► **Sound**: How well does the game sound? Does it have a nice soundtrack or is it just a bunch of plastic in your hands.

► **Playability**: How well does the game play? The better the game plays, the better the score.

► **Entertainment**: How much fun does the game provide? The more fun the game provides, the higher the score.

► **Replay Value**

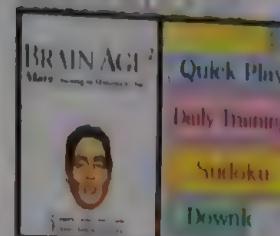
High	Moderately High	Moderately Low	Low
High	Moderately High	Moderately Low	Low
Moderately High	Medium	Low	Very Low
Moderately Low	Medium	Low	Very Low

THE SCORING SYSTEM

10
9
8
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6
5
4
3
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1



Dead Head Fred



Brain Age 2: More Training in Minutes a Day



Sid Meier's Civilization IV:
Beyond the Sword

Never a developer to disappoint its many fans, Firaxis Games has expanded the already impressive strategy epic Civilization IV to truly amazing proportions. By adding a massive amount of non-war fare-based ways for players to interact with their rival civilizations, Beyond the Sword opens up gameplay farther than it has ever been before. Whether you choose espionage, corporate imperialism, or the revamped space race, there are more paths to dominance than the most tyrannical despot could ask for.

edge

This is where we break down minute plot from games. So whenever you see this column, you know you're in for some serious gaming geekiness.

1080p	1080i	1080n	1080s
480p	480i	480n	480s
720p	720i	720n	720s
540p	540i	540n	540s
400p	400i	400n	400s
360p	360i	360n	360s
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10p	10i	10n	10s
5p	5i	5n	5s
3p	3i	3n	3s
2p	2i	2n	2s
1p	1i	1n	1s

► **Board Games**: Games that are played on a board.

► **Cell Imaging**: Cell phone imaging.

► **CPU**: Central processing unit.

► **Digital Camera**: A camera that uses a digital sensor instead of film.

► **Fighting**: A term we use for games like Mortal Kombat and Tekken.

► **First Party**: Games developed by the company that owns the platform.

► **FMV**: Full-motion video.

► **GPU**: Graphics processing unit.

► **Headphone**: A device that connects to your computer to play music.

► **Input**: A device that allows you to control a game.

► **Memory**: RAM and ROM.

► **Modem**: A device that connects your computer to the Internet.

► **Normal Mapping**: A technique used to create realistic textures.

► **Strategy**: Games that require planning and thought.

► **Third Party**: Games developed by companies other than the platform owner.

► **UI**: User interface.

► **VR**: Virtual reality.

► **Widescreen**: A monitor that is wider than it is tall.

REVIEWS INDEX



Blue Dragon
Brain Age 2: More Training in Minutes a Day
Brother in Arms DS
Dead Head Fred
Emelie Senat
Heroes of Mana
Hour of Victory
Jeanne d'Arc
Kai
Cinnabar AR
Madden NFL 04
Mario Strikers Charged
Monster Hunter Freedom
NASCAR 04
Picross DS
Palmman Battle Revolution
Project Sylphed
Robotella DS
Robotella Online
SNES Classics: Super Mario Bros. 3
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 04
Transformers
Vampire Knight
Warrior Monk Ronin



KBOX 360

BioShockIN-STYLING ACTION > PUBLISHER 2K GAMES
DEVELOPER 2K BOSTON > RELEASE AUGUST 21 > RATED M

AMAZON.COM \$49.99

D

o you like to play games that make you feel like you're in a movie? If so, BioShock is the game for you.

The game is set in a underwater city called Rapture. It's a美丽而神秘的都市，充满了美丽的建筑和海底生物。玩家扮演的是一个叫做“Spartan”的士兵，他的任务是保护这座城市不受敌人侵袭。

游戏中，玩家可以使用各种武器和技能来战斗。同时，游戏中还有许多谜题需要解决，例如如何通过各种机关和陷阱来到达目的地。游戏的画面非常精美，色彩鲜艳，场景设计也非常出色。

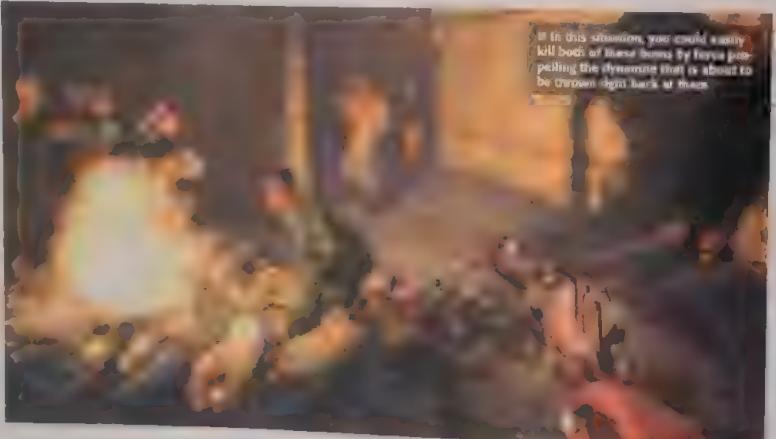
总的来说，BioShock 是一款非常值得一玩的游戏。

play to explore, to climb, to damage, to fight, to succeed. You simply have to go big and clean up your mess to continue on. As for what a good player is, knowing you really can't take a bite out of it. Yes, this system could allow gamers at all skill levels to enjoy this game - which is a definite plus - but it may alienate gamers who only turn on and run a challenge.

Even though BioShock is a game, it's still a movie. And that's why the game is so good. It's a movie that's full of mystery, suspense, and action. It's a movie that's full of surprises, twists, and turns. It's a movie that's full of life, and that's what makes it such a great game.

To play BioShock, you'll need to buy the game. It's available at most major retailers, including Amazon.com. Once you've got the game, you'll be ready to start playing. And you won't be disappointed.

In this situation, you could easily kill both of these bunnies by force, but packing the shotgun that is about to be thrown right back at me.



BOTTOM LINE 10

> Concept: The creators of BioShock 2 have honed their craft to create an FPS that is as atmospheric as it is powerful.

> Graphics: In almost every room, you'll stop to carefully analyze the amazing detail, noting how BioShock 2 is one of the most beautiful games out there.

> Sound: The eerie music, ambient noise recordings, and sound effects mix to create a sense of unease and dread, especially when you're alone.

> Playability: No matter what weapon or power you have equipped, you always feel like a hero.

> Entertainment: The power to destroy has never been as varied.

> Replay Value: High, though.

WHAT ABOUT PC
For a game that's largely an audiovisual experience, we wanted to review the PC version of BioShock this month. If there are substantive differences, we will publish a separate review at a later date.

Second Opinion 10

You stand over a genetically mutated corpse with a camera in hand, taking a picture of its final, twisted expression to appease a cruel puppet master. A haunting rendition of "Bei mir bist du schön" plays from a radio, over which you hear the low, whale-like cry of a Big Daddy as it ambles into sight. You freeze, but the hulking creature trips one of your proximity mines and fuses a glowing red eye on you in fury. Heart-stopping moments like these are what BioShock apart as one of the most intelligent and daring masterpieces in gaming. The ruined utopia of Rapture is portrayed in vivid detail, and you're not going to forget it. Even though BioShock is a game, it's still a movie. And that's why the game is so good.

It's a movie that's full of mystery, suspense, and action. It's a movie that's full of surprises, twists, and turns. It's a movie that's full of life, and that's what makes it such a great game. To play BioShock, you'll need to buy the game. It's available at most major retailers, including Amazon.com. Once you've got the game, you'll be ready to start playing. And you won't be disappointed.

FREEDOM IS POWER.

HONDA CIVIC SI

The all-new 197-hp Civic Si Sedan from Honda. Reverse your thinking.

Honda's first ever hybrid model. The Accord Hybrid. Reverse your thinking.

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XBOX 360

Blue Dragon

STYLE: 1-PLAYER ROLL PLAYING GAME **PUBLISHER:** MICROSOFT GAME STUDIOS
DEVELOPER: SONY INNOVATION **RELEASE:** AUGUST 28 **ESRB:** E

GET A JOB!

It's been a year since I left Tafta, my home town, and I know it's hard to believe there is a kind of familiarity between us. After all, we've never met. But I do know that the people here are nice, and the city is safe. Plus, I have a job now. That's right, I'm a dragon! I've been chosen to be the new leader of the dragon army. This means I'll be fighting alongside the other dragons to protect our world from the darkness that threatens us. And I'm not alone; I have a team of helpers who will support me every step of the way.

The job is not always easy, though. We face many challenges, such as fighting off the darkness that tries to destroy our world. But we're strong and determined, and we'll always be there for each other. So if you ever need a friend, just come to Tafta and say hello. You never know who you might meet or what adventures you might have together. Because in the end, it's not about the job; it's about the friends you make along the way.



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JOE

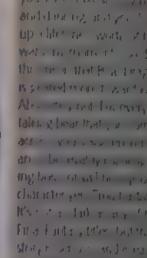
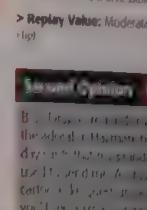


Niro's minotaur vanishes in Corporeal effect



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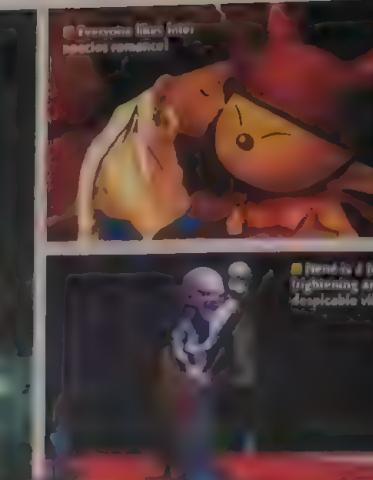


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JOE



REINER



BOTTOM LINE: 9
➤ Concept: Variable a dream team of characters to fight in RPGs, but also incorporates some of the best the genre has to offer.
➤ Graphics: Akira Toriyama's art translates perfectly into 3D, the characters look like sculpted figures, wandering around a world built to scale.
➤ Sound: The boss theme (performed by Deep Purple's Ian Gillan) sounds out of place, but the music is otherwise appropriate and beautiful. The voice acting is also exceptionally good.
➤ Playability: Unless you're playing in HD, some of the text may be difficult to read. It never hampers the action, though.
➤ Entertainment: It's full of class and fun mechanics for the RPG faithful, but even casual fans should find it accessible.
➤ Replay Value: Moderately high.

➤ Friend or Foe? Tightening and unpredictable villain

➤ Reply Value: Moderately high.

Second Opinion 8.5

But I think it's great that the developers have tried something different with Project Sylpheed. It's a departure from the standard RPG formula, and it's refreshing to see something new. The graphics are excellent, and the characters are well-animated. The story is interesting, and the combat is challenging. Overall, it's a solid game that deserves a try.

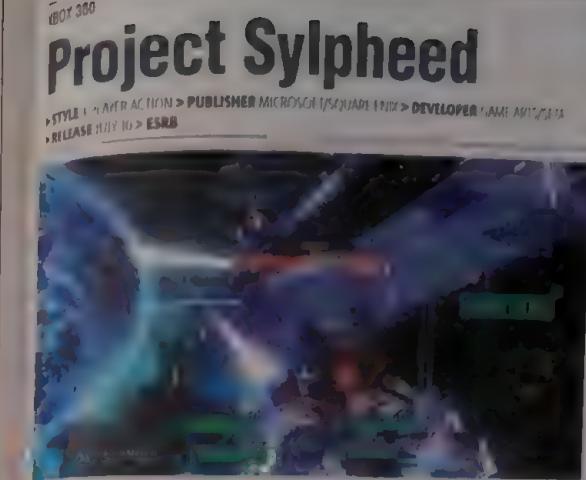
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JOE



REINER



HITTING A SMALL TARGET

A Combat, Rogue Squadron, and Wing Commander fans – rejoice! While Project Sylpheed is a unique departure from any of those three, your long dormant piloting skills are once again in handy in one of the most difficult and exciting space combat games in years. That's why it's more sad that this development team made it so unfriendly and inaccessible to the rest of the population.

I recall another console game with so many mechanics. It's not just that every button is

most of the buttons have several functional

➤ Concept: Fly through space while unleashing dozens of missiles and laser blasts at your foes.

➤ Graphics: Impressive on-screen chaos, and the CG cutscenes look pretty darn nice.

➤ Sound: Excellent alien-style voiceover work is plentiful.

➤ Playability: One of the most complicated and convoluted combat schemes imaginable is made

➤ Entertainment: Fans of 3D aerial shooters are in for a challenging and fun adventure – others will shake their head and start digging through the bag for the exchange receipt.

➤ Replay Value: Moderately low.

XBOX 360

Hour of Victory

STYLE: 1-PLAYER ACTION ADVENTURE **PUBLISHER:** MICROSOFT **DEVELOPER:** NINJA WAVE **RELEASE:** JUNE 25 **ESRB:** E

Second Opinion 7.5

If you're a fan of space combat flying programs, then you'll get a chance to fly around in the Project Sylpheed. This game has got it all, from the first-person perspective to the third-person view, and everything else in between. It's a well-oiled RPG combat system, and its astounding visual effects are sure to impress. The game is a bit slow at times, but that's what makes it special. Project Sylpheed does a great job of balancing the action and the strategy, and it's definitely worth a look.

JOE

REINER

➤ Concept: A poor man's StarCraft set in a tiny town.

➤ Graphics: Colorful textures, character models, and environments.

➤ Sound: You might as well skip

➤ Playability: A bad camera

➤ Entertainment: The game is fun, but the lack of depth and variety is disappointing.

➤ Replay Value: Low.

➤ Second Opinion 2.5

It's been a year since I left Tafta, my home town, and I know it's hard to believe there is a kind of familiarity between us. After all, we've never met. But I do know that the people here are nice, and the city is safe. Plus, I have a job now. That's right, I'm a dragon! I've been chosen to be the new leader of the dragon army. This means I'll be fighting alongside the other dragons to protect our world from the darkness that threatens us. And I'm not alone; I have a team of helpers who will support me every step of the way.

JOE

REINER

➤ Concept: A poor man's

➤ Graphics: Colorful

➤ Sound: You might as well skip

➤ Playability: A bad camera

➤ Entertainment: The game is fun, but the lack of depth and variety is disappointing.

➤ Replay Value: Low.

➤ Second Opinion 2.5

Vampire Rain

STYLE: 1-PLAYER ACTION ADVENTURE **PUBLISHER:** MICROSOFT **DEVELOPER:** ARTCOM **RELEASE:** JULY 10 **ESRB:** E

Second Opinion 3

You are Sam Fisher – I mean, John Lloyd – a member of a special ops team sent in to take out an army of Nightwalkers. Instead of fighting these vampires, however, players will mostly have to avoid them in search of the one correct path through a level. You know how in most stealth games you can usually escape after you get spotted? These speedy jerks will kill you almost instantly no matter where you run or hide. Due to the liberal use of invisible walls and impassable vampires, Artcom has ensured that you can only survive by climbing that one fire escape, shimmying along the ledge, and sliding down the right drain pipe. It costs many deaths in the name of trial-and-error to progress at all.

Your pistols and machine guns are completely useless, and only really exist to shoot off the occasional padlock or scare up some crows as a distraction. It's not until later in the game that you'll get a sniper rifle, shotgun, or UV knife (which evaporates after each use). Even then, you can use them only for brief flashes of time. Speaking of lack of combat, the first boss battle doesn't even kick in until level nine – and it sucks! You just lead this idiot into some traps, shoot him, and then hide behind a pillar until all of your energy recharges.

Multiplayer is slightly better

➤ Concept: A poor man's

➤ Graphics: Colorful

➤ Sound: You might as well skip

➤ Playability: A bad camera

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➤ Replay Value: Low.

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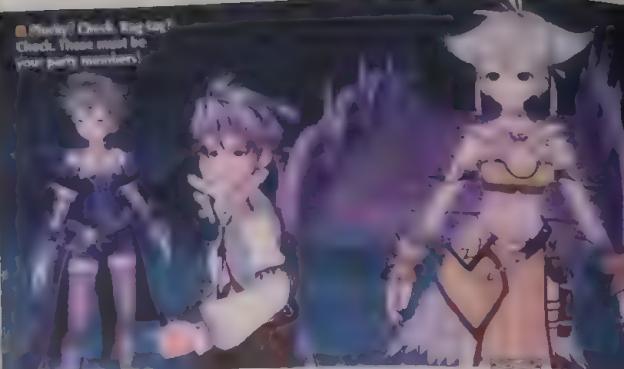
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➤ Sound: You might as well skip

➤ Playability: A bad camera

➤ Entertainment: The game is fun



XBOX 360

Eternal Sonata

STYLE: RPG / DATING GAME • PUBLISHER: RANDA • DEVELOPER: RANDA
RELEASE: FEBRUARY • ESRB: T

BRAVO!



BOTTOM LINE 8.25

- > Concept: Unique twist on RPGs that actually kickstarts your imagination.
- > Graphics: Artistic, colorful, and elegant.
- > Sound: Melodic use of piano, organ, and strings but also includes guitars, steel drums, and electric piano.
- > Playability: Storytelling and replay value are the main selling points of this RPG.
- > Entertainment: It's fun to play and explore the story, but it's not a game to be played over and over again.
- > Replay Value: Moderate

Second Opinion

Eternal Sonata makes a case for why it should be considered a role-playing epic, but it also shows that the human brain can only endure so many long-winded "meaning of life" sermons before it will melt and drain through the ears. While offering brilliant moments of intrigue, the game's story is mostly preachy, pretentious, and in some cases, so jarringly clichéd that you'll wonder if someone accidentally replaced part of the plot with a history textbook. In terms of atmosphere, this story can be irritating, but thankfully, this RPG finds other ways to dazzle you. The inventive battle system strikes the perfect balance between button-mashing fun and do-or-die strategizing. With enjoyable combat paving the way, field encounters rarely get old, the boss battles leave you gasping and saying "that was incredible," and you always look forward to a battle's conclusion to see if a new power has been unlocked. Eternal Sonata also delivers a level of visual grandeur that will make you applaud the technological advances that games have made over the years. It may be lacking in one key area, but this is one quest that you won't want to miss. —REINER

WASTED ENEMIES, NOT FRIENDS

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GAMECOCK MEDIA GROUP

WORTH A LOOK
7.25

- > Concept: **Lair**
- > Graphics: **Excellent**
- > Sound: **Great**
- > Playability: **Good**
- > Entertainment: **Entertaining**
- > Replay Value: **None**

PLAYSTATION

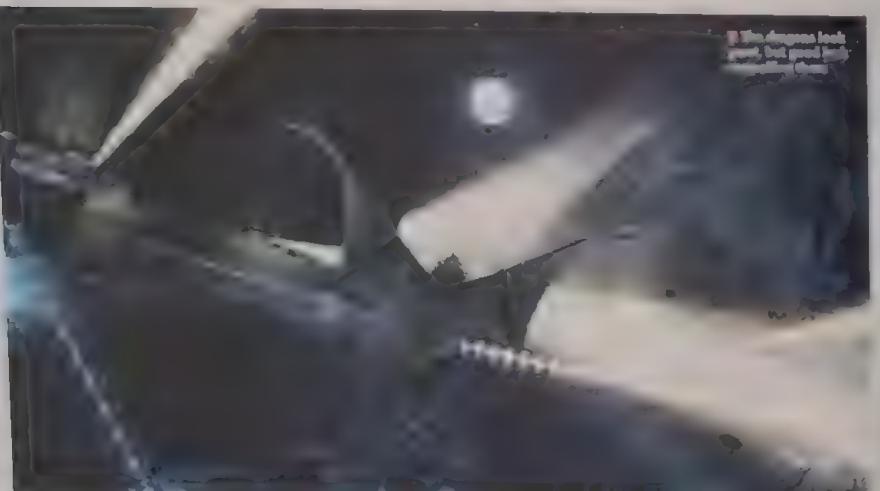
Lair

> PUBLISHER: E3 2004
> RELEASE: ESRB

FLYING WITH CLIPPED WINGS

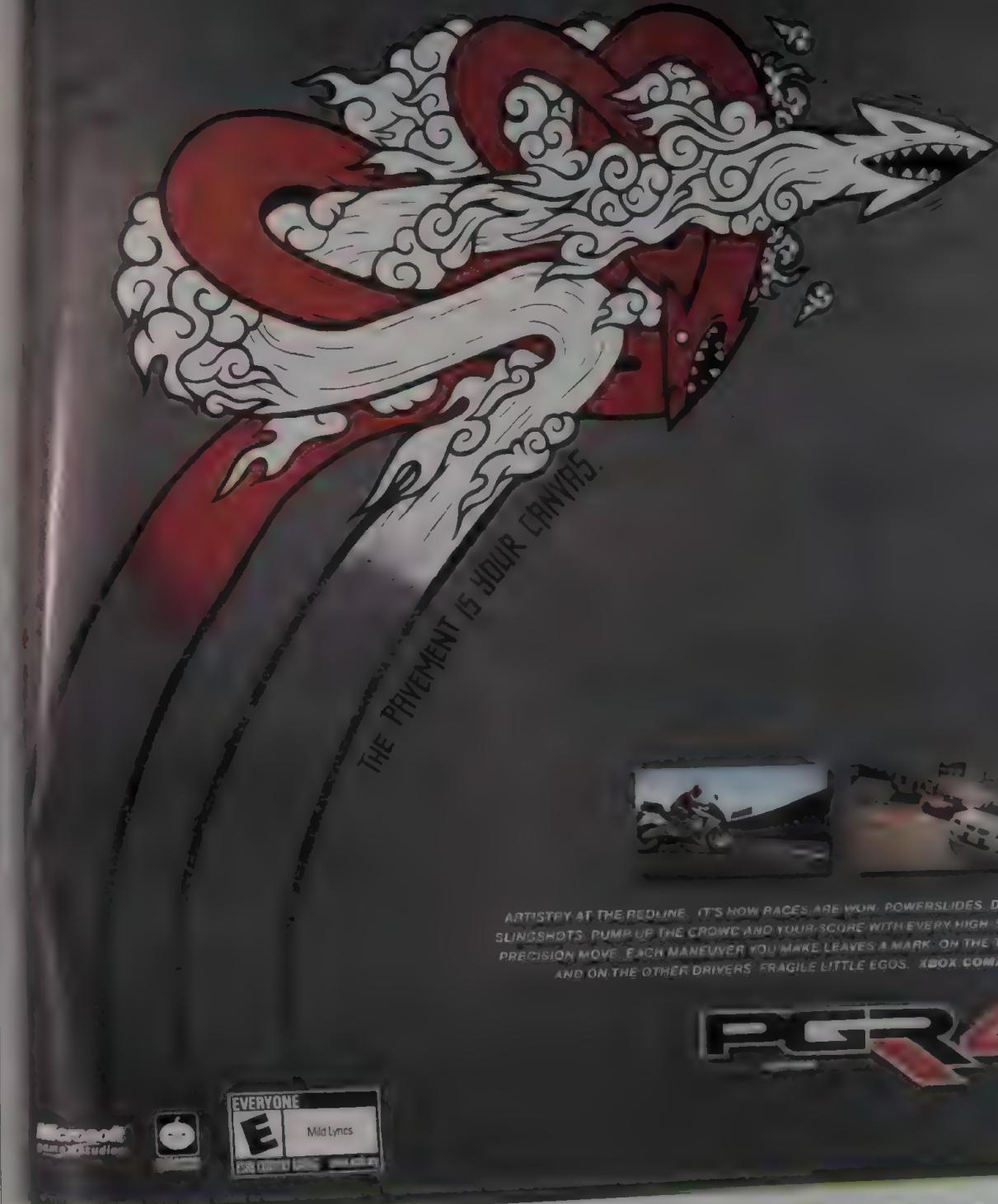
It's been a while since we last saw the return of the Lair. The original was a solid effort, though it did lack some polish. The graphics were decent, the sound effects were good, and the overall concept was solid. The game had a lot of potential, but it just didn't quite live up to its promise. The story was interesting, the characters were well-developed, and the gameplay was fun. But there were some issues with the controls and the difficulty level. Overall, it was a decent game, but it wasn't great.

REINER



Second Opinion

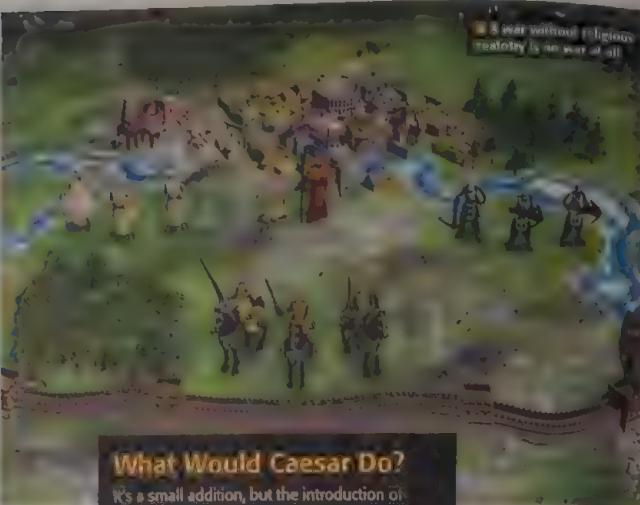
As a fan of the original game, I was excited to see what changes had been made. The graphics have been improved, and the sound effects are better. The flying mode is fun, and the dragon is a cool vehicle to drive. However, the game lacks depth and variety. The levels are mostly the same, and the puzzles are basically the same. The music is good, but the variety is limited. The game is also extremely difficult, which can be frustrating. Overall, it's a decent game, but it's not great.



ARTISTRY AT THE REDLINE. IT'S HOW RACES ARE WON. POWERSLIDES. DRIFTS. SLIDESHOTS. PUMP UP THE CROWD AND YOUR SCORE WITH EVERY HIGH-SPEED PRECISION MOVE. EACH MANEUVER YOU MAKE LEAVES A MARK. ON THE TRACK AND ON THE OTHER DRIVERS' FRAGILE LITTLE EGOS. XBOX.COM/PO4



FORZA 4



Sid Meier's Civilization IV: Beyond the Sword

> STYLE > PUBLISHER > JAMES
> RELEASE > ESRB



BOW TO THE MASTERS

...the game's most interesting addition is the introduction of random events that put players between a rock and a hard place.

Generally, an AI tracking down your units will be the last thing you want to do, but sometimes the game will force you to do just that. In one scenario, I had to capture a city that was under attack by another civilization. To do so, I had to march my forces through a field of archers who were trying to stop me at all costs.

It's a small addition, but the introduction of random events that put players between a rock and a hard place adds a personal touch to the often sterile business of government. One such quandary had the ransacking of my trading post houses from a nearby rival seeking asylum and the freedom to marry in my empire. The twist was that they were having a Buddhist (my state religion) ceremony while their native land followed Hinduism. My choices in the journal, from giving the proverbial middle finger to my rival and declaring a national holiday – which would score big points with other Buddhist nations, make my whole population happier, and likely provoke a war – to sending mere well-wishes to minimize the diplomatic penalty.

Workers, units, and buildings now supplement the structures in your espionage base of operations as little game players.

Corporations have also been added. As a function of the base game, you'll need to research the corporations tech to enable them. These constructs allow for the vector of interaction with your rivals. While warfare, corporations work much like a religion, so that they spread from city to city via the corporate executive unit, but have more varied effects like trade or production bonuses.

Finally, Beyond the Sword includes several new scenarios, including one of the base game. These scenarios expand on the base game's theme of political RPC to a more global level. Unfortunately, the quality swings and drops when I'm myself coming back to play the scenarios a few hours no matter how many times I've played it. That's as much a commentary on the excellence of the base game as it is a indictment of the expansion's styles, though.

Overall,

the game's replay value is high, but the addition of the new features is a welcome change.

Entertainment: A brilliant expansion to the best strategy game in years. Any further questions?

> **Replay Value:** High

Second Opinion 9.5

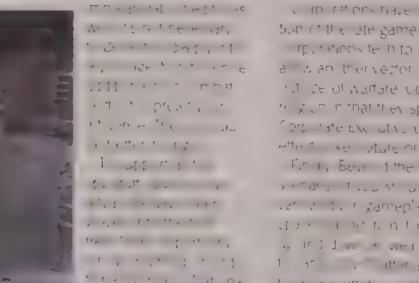
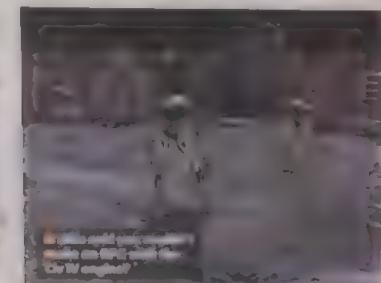
I already considered this to be the de facto standard in strategy games. Now that Firaxis found a way to give teeth to those who prefer the diplomatic approach to government in Beyond the Sword, that option has only grown stronger.

Instead of sharpening the tip of my spear and crushing my rivals face to face every time, I used the more subtle new look of espionage and corporate influence to stay ahead of the game. Why create boulders with an already struggling neighbor if you can just throw a wrench in its weak products and spit a word of my country's success? The result is so strong. This component it adds to the quality of those

entertaining moments of the base game as to complement the strengths of the original. The addition of the diplomatic styles, though, is a welcome change. Beyond the Sword is a must-buy, not only one of the best expansion packs for the series, but also one of the best additions to the franchise.

Entertainment: A brilliant expansion to the best strategy game in years. Any further questions?

> **Replay Value:** High



Dead Head Fred

> STYLE > PLAYER ACTION > PUBLISHER > DEVELOPER > RELEASE AUGUST 21 > ESRB M



BRAINDEAD

In all for game developers pushing the boundaries of what's acceptable subject matter for the medium. However, dropping a ton of new factions and scenarios

> **Concept:** Make Civilization IV better than ever by integrating espionage into the core game and adding a ton of new factions and scenarios

> **Graphics:** Looks great for a strategy game, but the true genius is in the way it presents pertinent information

> **Sound:** As always, the music is some of the best in the business

> **Playability:** If I were a professor, I'd teach entire courses on this interface. I'm not joking

> **Entertainment:** A brilliant expansion to the best strategy game in years. Any further questions?

> **Replay Value:** High

Bottom Line 9.5

loses its luster after the fifth or sixth repetition when the act of fighting is as formulaic and boring as it is here.

Collecting different heads and utilizing the various powers they grant you could have been a cool mechanic if the level design took advantage of it.

Sadly, it doesn't. Rather than opening up options by giving the player a diverse toolbox of abilities, the head powers serve primarily as one-shot gimmicks to overcome arbitrary obstacles.

Even so, Dead Head Fred is hardly broken. Beating up enemies and stealing their heads works, but is rarely compelling. Navigating bite-sized environments is easy to do, but almost never offers a sense of exploration or accomplishment.

The occasionally clever dialogue and intriguing visual style just aren't enough to save this title from its own mediocrities.—ADAM

Bottom Line 6

> **Concept:** Punch your way to vengeance while making snarky adult-oriented quips

> **Graphics:** Aside from repetitive enemy models, this is a great showcase for the PSP's capabilities

> **Sound:** Good voice work for the main character throws the awful supporting cast into sharp relief

> **Playability:** Slow, sluggish, and shoddy bare-bones combat

> **Entertainment:** With decent gameplay this could've been a cult hit. As is, it's more *Tromeo and Juliet* and less *Roxy Horror Picture Show*

> **Replay Value:** Low

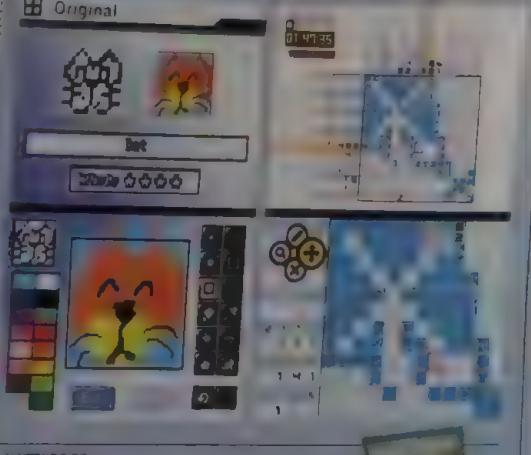
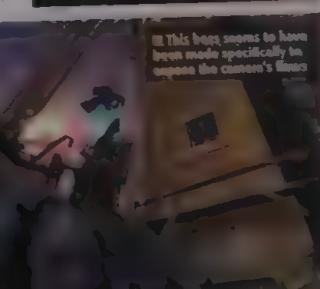
Second Opinion 6

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Instead of sharpening the tip of my spear and crushing my rivals face to face every time, I used the more subtle new look of espionage and corporate influence to stay ahead of the game. Why create boulders with an already struggling neighbor if you can just throw a wrench in its weak products and spit a word of my country's success? The result is so strong. This component it adds to the quality of those

entertaining moments of the base game as to complement the strengths of the original. The addition of the diplomatic styles, though, is a welcome change. Beyond the Sword is a must-buy, not only one of the best expansion packs for the series, but also one of the best additions to the franchise.

> **Replay Value:** High



Picross DS

> STYLE > PUZZLE > PUBLISHER > DEVELOPER > RELEASE AUGUST 21 > ESRB

Bottom Line 9.5

mashmashed to death that I never played the original. That's not to say that I didn't like it, but I did. However,

it's not the same.

Aware, heady, challenging. As a 3D puzzle editor, it's a simpler, more elegant take on the game, which is why I like it. But, over time, right, this game is a stone classic of the puzzle genre; one I'd put it right up there with any and all corners.

The concept is simple: Given a grid of squares, find the ones that contain numbers, which denote the lengths of blocks that should be filled in.

The execution is great: It's a solid editor that's easy to learn and fun to play.

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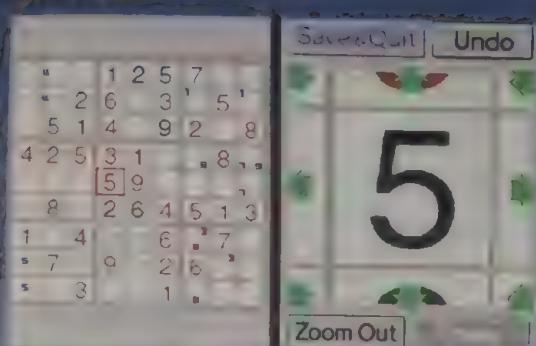
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Brain Age 2: More Training in Minutes A Day

THE EXPERT IS A FLESH AND BONE IMITATOR

BEST GAME **8.25**

Second Opinion **8.5**

In review
by Matt S. Smith
made in BrainAge

Finally, a
good game
that's not
just a brain
teaser.

MATT

Jeanne d'Arc

> STYLE: 1-PLAYER > PSP > PUBLISHER: NY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT > DEVELOPER: LEVEL 5 > RELEASE: AUGUST 21
> ESRB: T



A TRIUMPHANT CALL TO ARMS

In the beginning, you're given a small army of 14 units. You'll have to recruit more to expand your forces. As you do, you'll learn more about the game's mechanics, such as the fact that you can move your army in the direction of the enemy's base to capture it. This is a great way to start the game.

The game features the usual RTS elements, such as capturing resources, building structures, and upgrading units. It also includes some unique features, like the ability to recruit units from the ground or air. The graphics are colorful and vibrant, making the game look great.

One of the best parts of the game is that it gives you the freedom to envision your own strategy. Characters, abilities, and weapons can be swapped and moves can be tested out before their execution. Sure, there are boundless rules and more of your own ideas — and there are some battles where you're going to need some good ones.

That's what I like about this game: it's not just another RTS game. It's a game that's designed to be played in a variety of ways, and it's up to you to figure out what works best for you. —KATO



BOTTOM LINE **8.5**

> Concept: Level 5's masterpiece of strategy and combat.

> Graphics: Classic, vibrant levels featuring vibrant environments.

> Sound: Simple, tuneful, and upbeat sound effects.

> Playability: This game gives you the tools you need to succeed.

> Entertainment: Easily a worthwhile pickup for any strategy fan.

> Replay Value: Moderately high.

Second Opinion **8**

We've been operating under the misconception that this game is a bit of a disappointment. Jeanne d'Arc, the game's first entry into the genre, holds its own even though the level of difficulty is quite high. It's not quite as intense as that, but the battles are very satisfying. With its fast-paced action and unique blend of strategy and combat, this game is definitely worth a look. —JOE



NINTENDO DS

Heroes of Mana

> STYLE: 1-PLAYER STRATEGY (2-PLAYER VIA WIRELESS) > PUBLISHER: SQUARE ENIX
> DEVELOPER: BROWNE BROWN > RELEASE: AUGUST 14 > ESRB: E10+

HANG 'EM FROM THE MANA TREE

It is too bad that some gamers will play *Heroes of Mana* under the impression that they will get a handheld approximation of the real-time strategy experience. I concede that many of the concepts in this game are similar to those in an RTS: you harvest resources, build structures, and generate units to fight. Sadly, these ideas flounder so completely in execution that any resemblance to a real strategy title is lost.

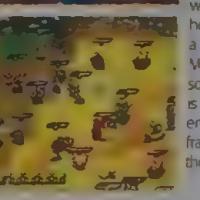
The most important component to hit the chopping block is your control over the units. The only command you can issue is attack-move, so if a specific enemy changes location while your guys are in transit, they'll reach their destination and stand there like gits. That's assuming that they even arrive, since the pathfinding is so laughably terrible.

It's frustrating and baffling to tell your group of heroes to move straight ahead, and instead they spread out every which way like they're looking for some kind of morons-only shortcut.

I want to clarify that very few of my issues with the game stem from the stylus-controlled interface. Selecting units works surprisingly well, and it was a good choice to use a centralized location for structures (instead of

a sprawling base). Issuing the orders isn't the problem; it's what the game decides to do (or not do) with them.

Even if you consider yourself a fan of the series, don't waste your time here. There was a time when the Mana name meant something, but this is a disappointing entry that drags the franchise through the mud. —JOE



HANDHELD QUICKIES

SP

Brave Story: New Traveler

> STYLE: 1-PLAYER ROLE-PLAYING GAME
> PUBLISHER: ETR
> DEVELOPER: ATLUS
> RELEASE: JUNE 19 > ESRB: E



BOTTOM LINE **7.25**

The PSP has seen its fair share of generic RPGs, but you'd be making a mistake to jump *Brave Story* in with that sub-par work. In addition to being one of the best-looking PSP titles out there, the game has a host of small surprises. Grid-based battles are stylish, and feature team attacks and recharge points. There is also a cool quest involving gothic liches, which are basically cuter and grottoes. *Brave Story* ultimately is a Dragon Quest clone, but at least it does some of its fairly conventional stuff with a fresh history angle. —JOE

NINTENDO DS

Brothers in Arms DS

> STYLE: 1-PLAYER ACTION (UP TO 4-PLAYER VIA WIRELESS) > PUBLISHER: BISOFIT
> DEVELOPER: CAMELOFT
> RELEASE: JUNE 19 > ESRB: E



BOTTOM LINE **6.75**

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NINTENDO DS

Luminous Arc

> STYLE: 1-PLAYER ACTION (UP TO 4-PLAYER VIA WIRELESS) > PUBLISHER: CAPCOM
> DEVELOPER: CAPCOM
> RELEASE: AUGUST 14 > ESRB: T



BOTTOM LINE **6**

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PSP

Monster Hunter Freedom 2

> STYLE: 1-PLAYER ACTION (UP TO 4-PLAYER VIA WIRELESS) > PUBLISHER: CAPCOM
> DEVELOPER: CAPCOM
> RELEASE: AUGUST 14 > ESRB: T



BOTTOM LINE **8.5**

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Smash Court Tennis 3

> STYLE: 1-PLAYER SPORTS
> PUBLISHER: NAMCO
> DEVELOPER: NAMCO
> RELEASE: AUGUST 14 > ESRB: T



BOTTOM LINE **8.5**

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review
bottom line 5
> Concept: The Mana art style translates fairly well, but the game is a bit slow in the execution.
> Graphics: The Mana art style translates fairly well, but the game is a bit slow in the execution.
> Sound: The soundtrack is nice, but there are some decent battle zones.
> Playability: Technically this is capable of being played without a controller.
> Entertainment: It's based on strategy, but it's not as fun as the original.
> Replay Value: Moderate.

Second Opinion 5
The game is a bit slow in the execution, but the Mana art style translates fairly well. The game is a bit slow in the execution.
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CHARTS

An In-Depth Listing Of The Best Selling Games

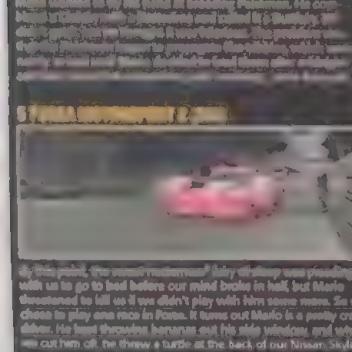
TOP 20

Sales Based Upon NPD Data For June 2007 Based On Units Sold

MASSIVE PARTY 8 (Wii)



Rank	Title	System	Units Sold	Release Date	Price
1	Mario Party 8	Wii	7.25	05-07	\$49
2	Wii Play		6		\$44
3	Pokémon Diamond		4.25	04-07	\$99
4	Pokémon Pearl		4		\$86
5	Forza Motorsport 2		6.25	05-07	\$60
6	Guitar Hero II		11.65	06-07	\$85
7	Guitar Hero II		11.65	06-07	\$90
8	Pokémon Battle Revolution	Wii	5.75	06-07	\$49
9	Resident Evil 4	PS2	0.5	06-07	\$30
10	The Darkness	N/A	360	07.75	\$59
11	Naruto: Ultimate Ninja 2	N/A	1.5	07.75	\$4
12	Transformers: The Game	N/A	0.5	07.75	\$4
13	Tenchu Z	N/A	360	06-07	\$60
14	New Super Mario Bros.	DS	9.25	05-06	\$34
15	Tomb Raider: Anniversary	N/A	0.5	07.75	\$4
16	Super Paper Mario		4		\$4
17	Transformers: The Game	N/A	0.5	07.75	\$4
18	MLB '07: The Show	N/A	0.5	07.75	\$4
19	Big Brain Academy	N/A	0.5	07.75	\$44
20	Dirt	N/A	0.5	07.75	\$4



TOP 10

Rank	Title	System	Units Sold	Release Date
1	Dragon Quest Swords: The Masked Queen and the Tower of Mirrors	Wii	6.5	Aug-07
2	The Legend of Zelda: Phantom Hourglass	DS	4	Aug-07
3	Ganbaru Watashi No Kakei Diary	DS	3.5	Aug-07
4	Wii Sports	Wii	2.5	Aug-07
5	DS Eye Training	DS	2	Aug-07
6	Wii Play		1.5	Aug-07
7	Chikasete! Chibi-Robo!	DS	1.5	Aug-07
8	Kirarin Revolution	DS	1	Aug-07
9	Monster Farm DS	DS	1	Aug-07
10	Rockman ZX Advent	DS	1	Aug-07



Rank	Title	System	Units Sold	Release Date
1	BioShock	N/A	360	
2	Sid Meier's Civilization IV: Beyond the Sword	N/A	DS	
3	Picross DS	N/A	DS	
4	Blue Dragon	N/A	360	
5	The Darkness	1	360	
6	Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2008	N/A	Mult	
7	Eternal Sonata	1 & 3	360	
8	Jeanne d'Arc	N/A	PSP	
9	World of Warcraft: The Burning Crusade	7	PC	
10	Guitar Hero Encore: Rocks the 80s	5	PS2	



Rank	Title	System	Units Sold	Release Date
1	World of Warcraft: The Burning Crusade	2	\$37	
2	World Of Warcraft	3	\$22	
3	Command & Conquer 3: Tiberium Wars	4	\$49	
4	The Lord of the Rings Online: Shadows Of Angmar	1	\$51	
5	The Sims 2 Seasons	6	\$29	
6	StarCraft: Battle Chest	N/A	\$19	
7	The Sims 2	5	\$35	
8	3333 XP Games	9	\$10	
9	The Sims 2 Celebration Stuff	7	\$18	
10	Warcraft III Battle Chest	19	\$39	



REVIEWSARCHIVE

PLAYSTATION 3

Rank	Title	System	Units Sold	Release Date
1	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
2	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
3	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
4	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
5	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
6	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
7	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
8	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
9	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
10	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
11	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
12	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
13	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
14	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
15	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
16	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
17	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
18	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
19	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
20	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07

WII

Rank	Title	System	Units Sold	Release Date
1	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
2	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
3	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
4	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
5	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
6	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
7	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
8	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
9	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
10	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
11	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
12	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
13	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
14	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
15	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
16	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
17	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
18	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
19	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
20	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07

NINTENDO DS

Rank	Title	System	Units Sold	Release Date
1	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
2	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
3	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
4	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
5	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
6	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
7	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
8	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
9	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
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17	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
18	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
19	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
20	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07

PS3

Rank	Title	System	Units Sold	Release Date
1	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
2	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
3	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
4	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
5	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
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16	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
17	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
18	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
19	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
20	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07

PC

Rank	Title	System	Units Sold	Release Date
1	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
2	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
3	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
4	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
5	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
6	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
7	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
8	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
9	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
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16	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
17	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
18	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.25	Nov-07
19	Call of Duty: Black Ops	PS3	8.	

CLASSICGI

Where The Past Comes Alive



UNLIMITED ENABLED

RETURN OF THE KONG

WE TALK TO THE REIGNING DONKEY KONG CHAMPION

You may not have seen it – you may not have even heard of it yet – but this year's biggest video game match up already happened, and it wasn't on consoles. *King of Kong: A Fistful Of Quarters* hits theaters across the U.S. on August 17th. The documentary recounts the story of Steve Wiebe, high school teacher and family man, as he challenges legendary video game champ Billy Mitchell for the top score in the classic coin-op *Donkey Kong*. The movie is sure to please gamers and non-gamers alike, so we thought we'd sit down with Wiebe and talk to him about his favorite games, playing them competitively, and what it's like being in a documentary.

And how many games will you play if you are practicing or competing?

I've done probably three games if I feel like I'm playing really well. But after two or three games you get really burned out. Focusing for that long wipes you out, so you can't really go more than two serious games. That's four or five hours, that's what makes it tough when you are going to these tournaments where you are sitting there all day. You actually get worse the more you keep playing sometimes. It kind of takes away from your energy. That's why it's hard to get a live score. If you are at a tournament, you don't have the luxury of months, you have to perform in the matter of a few days, so you feel that you have to sit there for 10 hours straight to get the most chances to do it. That's what's tough.

How did you end up getting involved with having a documentary made about you?

It was a friend of mine from high school that knew Ed [the producer] from college. When I went to my high school buddy's house I would fill him in on my *Donkey Kong* record, and after a while of doing this he realized that something a little over-the-top was going on, and he talked to Ed. Ed was looking for another idea for a documentary. Then I met Ed through [high school buddy] Mike and they started following a multitude of stories, not just mine. They were going into this open-minded and looking at different things like Doris Self's Q*Bert to Halo to that Fatal IT guy. They didn't know what was going to be the most interesting story.

So as far as you knew you were just going to be a sidebar in this whole thing?

Yeah, at the very beginning I thought I was just going to be a just a little sidebar story from some historic arcade or current gaming documentary. It could have been that, but it ended up being the only thing.

What was the hardest part then of playing games competitively?

I don't mind people watching or cameras. People think that puts pressure on you or whatever, but I don't really feel that pressure, but there is the time constraint. You

know when you have just a limited time to go for a record, if you are not on your game that one day then that is one day out the window. When you are at home and you are not feeling it you might go out there and just play one game, or you don't even get through a game. If you are not into it you just walk away, and try the next day, but if you are at a tournament you can't afford to do that. That's really tough.

In order to master the timing on the spring stages in *Donkey Kong*, Steve Wiebe mastered their patterns.



The competitive video game arena is filled with some pretty interesting characters and its own culture. What was it like being around that for the first time?

I didn't really feel any animosity from them. I didn't really feel like there was this gang or club. I knew that some of these gamers had a history; some of these gamers have been playing for 20 some years. I didn't wish to be part of the club. I was just there being myself, and I was fine with that. It didn't seem like I was being pushed out, and I wasn't exactly trying to hang out with them outside of when I was going for a record. I was cool with how everything was going down.

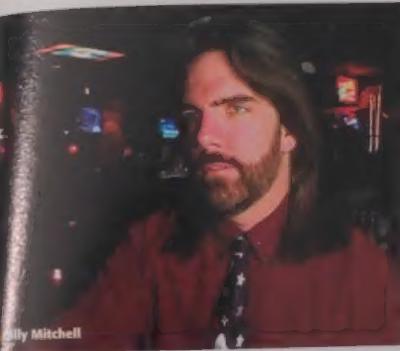
So they were all pretty friendly to you?

On the surface they were, but behind the scenes they were... I don't know if you've read anything about the culture, but they have a very tight-knit group that is very loyal to Billy, and you can understand that if they've been

friends with him for so long, they are going to stick together. I'm fine with that.

You have this sort of cage fight setup in the film, where both opponents are introduced at the beginning of the film, but then you never really set foot in the ring with Billy. Was that frustrating?

He was dodging me the whole time we were down there. It was frustrating because I was hoping to go head-to-head to settle any dispute, but for whatever reasons he has, he didn't want to compete. It was frustrating, but I thought, "Well, it opens the door for me to go ahead and go for the first one to get one million live." Which still hasn't been done. I'm hoping to do that. But I would have loved to have had him there and go head-to-head. That would have been great. There would have been a lot of people watching us.



Billy Mitchell has publicly stated that he doesn't like how he was portrayed in the film. What do you think about that?

Well, he won't see the movie, and when people comment on movies they haven't seen it's kind of hard to comment back. All these people in his camp say that the movie does a disservice to Billy. They say, "Well, I haven't actually seen the movie, but I've heard..." And then they say statements that aren't even true about the movie. So that is frustrating when they aren't even willing to go see it and then they comment on it. But I do understand that if Billy did see it then I wouldn't expect him to be happy about it, but that is what the cameras caught. There is no CG Billy; it's actually him. There are no voiceover dubs. No tricks. That's what they are claiming: that we manipulated the film.

The controversy I think is good for the documentary. You know if we were friendly and shook hands before playing then no one would care, but when you have rivalry in a competition then people start going, "What is this craziness over?" So, I think it only helps the publicity for the film. Which is probably what they don't want.



A MATTER OF PERSPECTIVE?

King of Kong has sparked a bit of controversy in the competitive video game community. We turned to Walter Day, founder of official video game scorekeepers Twin Galaxies (also featured in documentary), to help give us some perspective on the film's debated issues.

What was it like being in a documentary?

At the time that much of the footage was filmed at the 2005 Funspot event, there were three competing documentary film crews present, all working on independent films. It was overwhelming to have so many people demanding your time. All the players felt the same way. Many players were upset by the intrusion of the media, but they graciously accommodated the media as well as they could.

There has been some controversy surrounding the film: that certain information or facts have been left out of the film, or that it doesn't portray Billy in an accurate light. What do you think of all that?

The producers of the movie positioned Billy in an unfavorable light. Steve Wiebe is a very nice man and we stand behind his *Donkey Kong* high score. However, Billy is a very wonderful person, too, and he should not have been portrayed as the bad boy of the film. The producers showed tons of footage that portrayed Steve as the good guy. They could also have obtained just as much footage that shows Billy as the nice guy. However, this was not an objective documentary in my opinion, it was a scripted story and they needed a villain to play opposite Steve's good guy.

Members of the TG staff are working on a voluminous list that shows all the factual mistakes

Do you have eyes set on any other classic games? You had the *Donkey Kong Jr.* high score as well.

They took that away. *Donkey Kong Jr.* is a little easier, well it's a lot easier actually. There are like two boards out of the four that are strictly patterns. And there is no variability, so that makes it easier, so I'd like to get that record back. It wouldn't take much to get that one; I might even do it this summer depending on what time I have. I stayed pretty much to the run and jump kind of games, *Popeye*, *Mario Bros.*, *Pac-Man*, *Donkey Kong*, *Donkey Kong Jr.*. But pretty much right now I just play *Donkey Kong*, and *Donkey Kong Jr.* I'm not like some of those gamers who are trying to get the world record on every single game.

They have a little checklist and they get one and they check it off. If you've heard of Donald Haze, He has *Frogger*, *Joust*, and a whole host of records. That's all some of these people do their whole life. I'm just a hobbyist who just happened to love *Donkey Kong* and *Donkey Kong Jr.* That's pretty much my two trick pony.

So nothing new has happened since what we saw at the end of the documentary?

I haven't heard of any tapes or live events from Billy, so I'm not really going to go after anything until he responds. We'll see what he does though.

But if he does you would jump back in?

Yeah, I would definitely do what I could to get the record back. ■ ■ ■

Editor's Note: Since the time of this interview, Billy Mitchell has taken back the top score. Only time will tell if Wiebe can beat Mitchell's new record of 1,050,200 and reclaim the title.

Interested to find out more about *King of Kong: A Fistful of Quarters*? Make sure you check out our Unlimited section online for our interview with director Seth Gordon, plus extended interviews with Wiebe and Day.

This Month In Gaming History

On September 9, 1989, Sega launched its last video game console, the Dreamcast, in the United States. The system was short-lived, selling a little over 10 million units, making it just slightly more successful than Sega's previous console, the Saturn (which sold only 9 million units). Despite a moderately successful launch and a modest but loyal fanbase, the Dreamcast only remained on retail shelves for a few brief years. Its last official US release, *NHL 2002*, came out in February of 2002. Its fallings have been blamed on a lack of strong third-party support and an over-hyping of the not-yet-released *PlayStation 2*, but probably also had a great deal to do with the lack of *Panzer Dragoon Saga* sequels.





SEGA CD

EARTHWORM JIM SPECIAL EDITION

> STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION > PUBLISHER VIRGIN INTERACTIVE > DEVELOPER SHINY ENTERTAINMENT > RELEASE 1995

It's interesting how a person's sense of humor changes over the years. Where booger jokes were once outrageous, they eventually become just disgusting. And where inappropriate farts were once hilarious they become sadly embarrassing. That's why it's impressive that Earthworm Jim – a game practically birthed from those childish constitutions – can still bring on the chuckles. When it was first released, Earthworm Jim was applauded for its detailed animations and imaginative settings. This still holds up. There is a great variety of level. Where one minute Jim will be piloting a sub through the ocean looking for oxygen, the next minute he could be bungee jumping with a mucus monster. Even Jim's rogues' gallery remains amusing. His fight against Bob the Killer Goldfish is particularly genius. If you can find it, the Sega CD version – which features improved graphics, bigger levels, and a better soundtrack – is the definitive version.



PLAYSTATION 2

SILPHEED: THE LOST PLANET

> STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION > PUBLISHER GAME ARTS/TREASURE > DEVELOPER WORKING DESIGNS > RELEASE 2001

With its complicated sequel having snuck onto the 360, we thought we'd look back several years to the last installment of the series, a title that marked perhaps the very first foray into the top-down shooter realm for the PS2. While later games of that generation would blow The Lost Planet away on a graphical level, the simple shooter mechanic remains fun six years later. A few simple features set Silpheed apart from its contemporaries, namely the option to mount two different weapons simultaneously, out of an eventual choice of almost ten. Your sleek and powerful space fighter also has a life bar, eschewing the traditional one-shot one-kill feature common in the genre. This allows for a little more chaos onscreen without the difficulty rocketing into the stratosphere, and also encourages players to be a little more adventurous in their attacks. Huge parasitic alien enemies make for some great boss fights, and there's even a little primitive FMV work to be viewed between missions. Silpheed certainly didn't change anybody's world, but it's interesting how the simple gameplay of a title like this holds up, while more "complex" titles of the PS2 launch window are hard to even bear.

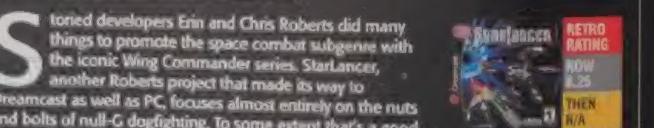


PC

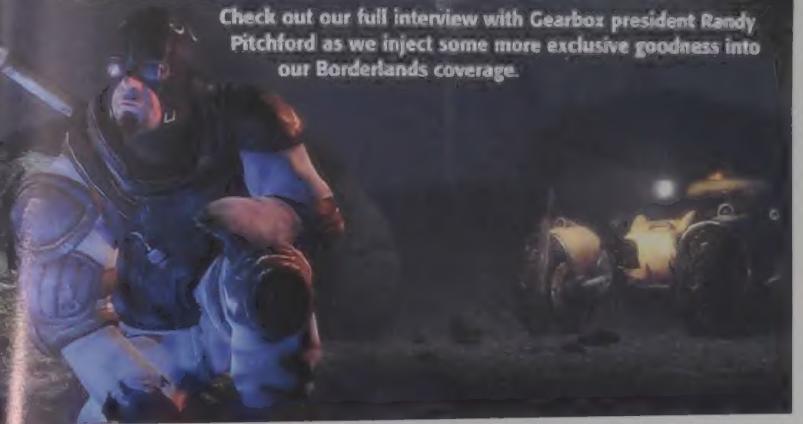
STARLANCER

> STYLE 1-PLAYER ACTION (UP TO 4-PLAYER VIA INTERNET OR LAN) > PUBLISHER MICROSOFT > DEVELOPER DIGITAL ANVIL/WARTHOG > RELEASE 2000

Storied developers Erin and Chris Roberts did many things to promote the space combat subgenre with the iconic Wing Commander series, Starlancer, another Roberts project that made its way to Dreamcast as well as PC, focuses almost entirely on the nuts and bolts of null-G dogfighting. To some extent that's a good thing, as the mission objectives are varied enough to keep gameplay fresh throughout the lengthy campaign and the story isn't much deeper than "OMG Space Russians!" Still, this approach sacrifices some of the depth that made Wing Commander such a classic series. Online co-op is great, but the clear strength of Starlancer is solving the campaign's various tactical puzzles and executing your ideas in real time. The several craft at your disposal and the many available weapons present enough choice to create a very compelling experience. For a largely no-frills dogfighter, Starlancer delivers enough tightly crafted gameplay to overcome its thin areas and be worth your time.

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BORDERLANDS**

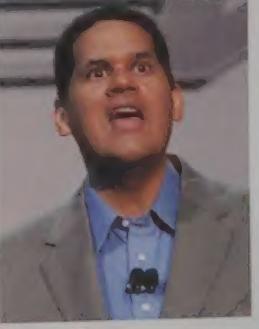
Check out our full interview with Gearbox president Randy Pitchford as we inject some more exclusive goodness into our Borderlands coverage.

**The King of Kong:
A Fistful of Quarters**

Just in time for the film's release, Ben sits down with *King of Kong* director Seth Gordon to discuss his documentary chronicling the showdown between arcade legends Billy Mitchell and Steve Wiebe.

**Borderlands:
Ask the Editor**

Want to learn more about Gearbox's exciting new title? Send your questions to askbryan@gameinformer.com and our smarmy, mustachioed editor will do his best to answer your questions.

**Reggie Time**

Read our full E3 interview with Nintendo of America president Reggie Fils-Aime to hear his take on the new Wii accessories and state of Wi Online, among other things.

**E3 Wrap**

You've seen the E3 Top 50 list, now check out each editor's personal Top 10 list from the show. Ben has such poor taste, doesn't he? No wonder he gets hate mail.

**GI Places: Gearbox**

Nick tours the esteemed halls of the talented developers that brought us Brothers in Arms and Borderlands.

**ALSO ONLINE
THIS MONTH:**

Game Informer Online is actually off the road for about 10 minutes to give you the hands-on previews, videos, and screenshots of this fall's hottest games.

nerds are for dorks
GEEKS ARE 4-EVER
hacker instead of slacker
Alpha Geek, Turbo Nerd, Proto-hacker
I'M NOT ABOUT
TO TEST MY
most alive when
24/7 LIFE
in playing in the console
Network guru, AI characters
Network Security backbone
Bring the board game toaster
blog command z
Pearl Ruby and Ada
BlackBerry, great apps, emails and
Laptop for most projects contacts
Gots to get the cheddar
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FONT ISSUES, DUST BUNNIES
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